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New York

President: Mrs. Juul ..... (Norway)

The meeting was called to order at 9.40 a.m.

Agenda items 82 to 97 (*continued*)

Thematic discussion on item subjects and introduction and consideration of all draft resolutions submitted under all disarmament and international security agenda items

The Chairperson: The Committee will first seek to conclude its thematic debate on conventional weapons. I will thus give the floor to those representatives who were unable to make statements yesterday. I would again kindly request delegations to keep their interventions as brief as possible.

Mr. Lezona (Congo) (*spoke in French*): My delegation is concerned about the illicit traffic in and proliferation of small arms and light weapons, which are a threat to international peace and security. The use of that category of weapons is disastrous for the international community. We know that more than 500,000 people — the majority of them civilians — are killed with such weapons every year, most of them during armed conflict. There are other consequences that are no less tragic, such as fear, poverty, disease, famine, violence and the mass displacement of populations. As to the scope of this disaster, these weapons are now considered weapons of mass destruction.

Today, the strengthening of international solidarity and cooperation is proving more necessary than ever in the fight against the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons. That is why, to that end, the Government of the Republic of the Congo has always demonstrated resolve by encouraging cooperation among its organs and international organizations and civil society. That is also we are involved in the activities of the United Nations Standing Advisory Committee on Security Questions in Central Africa to implement the Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects.

The Congo, which experienced a civil war between 1997 and 1999, knows full well the impact of international cooperation, particularly in implementing policies aimed at the disarmament, demobilization and reintegration of former combatants and at peacebuilding. Here, I should highlight the major role played by the United Nations Standing Advisory Committee on Security Questions in Central Africa in helping the 11 States of the subregion to promote confidence-building measures in order to prevent, manage and resolve the conflicts that often face them.

Indeed, given the many conflicts and persistent tensions that have afflicted most of these States over the past decade, the Committee felt the need to organize seminars and conferences on the crucial issues now before us. We could mention, among others, the seminar on the implementation in Central Africa of the report of the Secretary-General on the causes of conflict and the promotion of durable peace and sustainable development in Africa, held in July 1999 at Yaoundé; the subregional conference on the illicit

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circulation and proliferation of small arms and light weapons, held in October 1999 at N'Djamena; and the seminar on the implementation of the Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons, held in May 2003 at Brazzaville.

The progressive implementation of the relevant decisions and recommendations of those seminars and conferences has enabled the States of Central Africa to achieve encouraging results, despite no lack of stumbling blocks. The non-aggression and mutual assistance pacts and the Protocol relating to the Establishment of the Council for Peace and Security in Central Africa, which are already in force, and the United Nations Subregional Centre for Human Rights and Democracy in Central Africa, established at Yaoundé, are just a few examples. That is why Congo, like other delegations of the States of the subregion, reaffirms its support for the Committee's activities. Moreover, we call on the Department for Disarmament Affairs to enhance the Committee's activities.

This year, thanks to the assistance of bilateral and multilateral partners, the Congo has been able to collect and destroy 12,800 light weapons and more than 112,000 rounds of ammunition. Here, we wish to thank the United Nations Development Programme, the European Union and the World Bank, which are providing valuable support to the Government of the Republic of the Congo to that end and in our peacebuilding efforts. We are realistic enough to understand that not all the illicit weapons in circulation in our country will be collected overnight. But it will not be possible to continue to use them if the ammunition supply is cut off.

Without adequate monitoring, weapons and ammunition coming from the legal trade can pass too easily into the hands of armed groups. That is why my delegation supports any initiative by the international community to develop and implement, within a national or subregional framework, measures to deal appropriately with the trade linked to the stockpiling of surplus conventional ammunition.

We also note that, owing to the porosity of borders and the lack of adequate weapons detection equipment, the gaps in national monitoring are increasing, revealing the extent to which the global trade needs rules that likewise have a global reach. My delegation is convinced that the time has come for the international community to establish a treaty on the weapons trade that is effective and legally binding.

My delegation, which has always supported the relevant draft resolutions of the First Committee aimed at disarmament, non-proliferation and international security, will do the same this year. Therefore, we would also like to have the Committee's full support for the draft resolutions that we have co-sponsored on conventional weapons and regional disarmament and security measures, particularly those on assistance to States for curbing the illicit traffic in small arms and light weapons and collecting them, the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons in all its aspects, implementation of the Convention on Landmines, efforts towards an arms trade treaty and the activities of the United Nations Standing Advisory Committee on Security Questions in Central Africa.

Mr. Boureima (Niger) (*spoke in French*): As this is the first time that I have taken the floor, permit me at the outset to congratulate you, Madam, on your election as Chairperson of the First Committee. The delegation of the Niger wishes to assure you of its full cooperation in carrying out your lofty mission. I am convinced that, under your skilful and wise guidance, the work of our Committee will proceed in an ideal atmosphere and will be crowned with success.

The thematic debate on the issue of small arms and light weapons is very timely, since it is taking place only a short time after the holding, in July 2006, of the United Nations Conference to Review Progress Made in the Implementation of the Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects.

Indeed, because of disagreements on a number of important aspects of this issue, the Conference could not produce an outcome document. That means that no new guidelines could be provided for a global follow-up mechanism to review progress in implementing of the Programme of Action in future, as highlighted in the Secretary-General's report. Such guidelines are essential, because, despite the progress made in implementing the Programme of Action, no action has yet been taken on important aspects of that issue, since they were not taken into account in 2001.

While we recognize that much remains to be done to curb the phenomenon of the circulation of small arms and light weapons, we are pleased that the

international community as a whole is paying close attention to that subject.

From the universal Organization and its specialized agencies to non-governmental and civil society organizations, together with regional and subregional organizations and States, everyone is concerned. At the United Nations, we welcome coordination of action on small arms through the relevant mechanism. The activities of UNICEF and the United Nations Development Programme, in cooperation with the Department for Disarmament Affairs, have had a positive impact in several regions of the world.

Africa, which for over a decade has had to face that scourge more than any other region, has not been inactive, either at the level of individual States or at the subregional and regional levels. Thus, the Second Continental Conference of African Governmental Experts and Regional Economic Communities on the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons, held in Windhoek, Namibia, in December 2005, after having considered the progress achieved in the implementation of the Programme of Action, adopted a common position, which the African ministers for foreign affairs endorsed at their meeting in Khartoum in January 2006. The common position reaffirms the Bamako Declaration on an African Common Position on the Illicit Proliferation, Circulation and Trafficking of Small Arms and Light Weapons.

At the subregional level, the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) should be congratulated and encouraged on the significant progress it has achieved in the implementation of the United Nations Programme of Action and in its fight against the proliferation of small arms and light weapons with the conversion on 14 June 2006 of the 1998 Moratorium on the Importation, Exportation and Manufacture of Light Weapons in West Africa into a legally binding instrument, the Convention on Small Arms and Light Weapons, Their Ammunition, and Other Related Materials. We are pleased that the ECOWAS initiative was welcomed and may soon open the way to even more ambitious initiatives.

In that respect, we welcome the draft resolution submitted by the United Kingdom and entitled "Towards an arms trade treaty: establishing common international standards for the import, export and transfer of conventional arms". My delegation reaffirms its support for the draft, which is perfectly in line with my country's position and actions on the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons.

Niger, which encountered this phenomenon following an armed rebellion in the 1990s, has striven at the subregional and national levels to combat effectively and resolutely the trade in small arms and light weapons. Indeed, in 1994 the National Commission for the Monitoring and Collection of Illicit Arms was established by decree and national legislation was revised to allow for its adoption. The National Commission, in which civil society is represented at a 50-per cent level, has undertaken several steps allowing for the achievement of interesting results.

We have had a similar experience with our Programme for Coordination and Assistance for Security and Development, financed by the United Nations, for the training of trainers of military and security forces in the fight against the proliferation of small arms. Furthermore, we have launched a pilot project on the collection and destruction of illicit weapons and support for sustainable development; developed a national report on the implementation of the United Nations Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All its Aspects; and organized the Flame of Peace event on 25 September 2000 and several mini-Flames.

The collection and destruction of weapons were facilitated by an amnesty law adopted in March 2003, which gave confidence to recalcitrant possessors of illicit weapons, and by concrete compensation awarded in exchange for weapons, such as in the Wells for Peace programme.

The results seen in Niger in its fight against the illicit trade and circulation of small arms and light weapons could not have been achieved without the valuable assistance of our partners, to whom we are sincerely grateful. However, if we are to preserve those gains, the assistance must be continued and increased.

Mr. Rodríguez García (Cuba) (*spoke in Spanish*): While we understand the relevance of disarmament and conventional arms control, Cuba believes it appropriate to reiterate in this debate on conventional weapons that nuclear disarmament continues to be the highest priority issue in the sphere of international peace and security. The very existence

and ongoing qualitative development of nuclear arsenals, based on dangerous doctrines of domination, aggression and preventive wars, constitute the most serious threat to international peace and security and the main incentive for an accelerated global nuclear arms race.

We note with great concern the decisions of certain countries to develop and use conventional weapons of increasing sophistication and lethality. This Committee should consider the situation in depth, as it is scandalous that vast amounts of resources are spent every year on conventional weapons alone that could be used effectively to meet the requirements of disarmament and that a blind eye is turned to the principles of the United Nations Charter on the establishment and maintenance of international peace and security, with the least possible diversion of world human and economic resources towards armaments.

Furthermore, Cuba wishes to draw attention to the obvious imbalance that exists in the treatment accorded to certain categories of conventional weapons to the detriment of others, the impact of which is considerably more devastating. We share the humanitarian concerns over the widespread proliferation of small arms and light weapons, as well as the indiscriminate and irresponsible use of anti-personnel mines. However, such weapons — which in many cases constitute the main and even the sole defence tools of many countries — are the subject of disproportionate attention as compared to other, highly sophisticated conventional weapons used in wars of aggression and conquest waged against third-world countries.

In today's hostile international context, Cuba reiterates that States have the sovereign right to acquire, manufacture and possess conventional weapons to meet their legitimate security and defence needs. We regret the failure of the United Nations Conference to Review Progress Made in the Implementation of the Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects to agree on a final document, due to the obstructionist attitude of one Member State. We hope that an effective follow-up mechanism will be created to ensure the full implementation of the Programme of Action. We also reaffirm our firm commitment to the Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All its Aspects.

Mr. Owoseni (Nigeria): Let me express the satisfaction of the Nigerian delegation at the efficient manner in which you, Madam, have been chairing the affairs of the First Committee thus far.

My delegation will speak on the issue of small arms and light weapons, under the conventional weapons cluster.

Against the backdrop of the impediments which the illegal trade in small arms and light weapons constitutes to the peace, stability, security and economic development of many developing countries, the Nigerian delegation has consistently advocated international measures to check the proliferation of those weapons in the national, regional and international arenas. The easy availability of those weapons continues to fuel, intensify and prolong conflicts, with the attendant catastrophic destruction of economic and social infrastructure in many developing countries, including in Africa. The proliferation of those weapons has also hindered global humanitarian efforts and exacerbated the phenomenon of child soldiers.

It is in realization of the negative impact of those weapons that the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), which initiated and faithfully maintained a moratorium on the importation and exportation of those arms, has now transformed that moratorium into a landmark Convention. Adopted in June this year, the Convention, inter alia, places a ban on arms transfers and their manufacturing materials into, from or through West Africa. Of particular significance for our region is the ban on the transfer of small arms and light weapons to non-State actors who have been implicated in the recurrent conflicts in our subregion and the attendant political instability and destruction of infrastructure. Under the Convention, a State member of ECOWAS shall be granted exemption for such transfers solely for purposes of legitimate national defence and security needs or participation in peacekeeping efforts, but those will have to receive the certification and approval of other member States.

Nigeria has always maintained that conflict prevention measures and the pursuit of negotiated solutions to conflicts remain the most effective approach to minimizing the demand for illicit small

arms and light weapons. Regrettably, the greatest obstacle to controlling the illicit proliferation of those weapons continues to be their easy accessibility to non-State actors. It is for that reason that my delegation has always called on the international community, and particularly on arms manufacturers and suppliers and brokering firms, to ensure that arms transfers are limited to Governments and licensed traders. There is also a need to agree on the imposition of sanctions on arms manufacturers and suppliers who divert their arms exports to illicit networks.

We reiterate our belief in the 2005 World Summit Outcome Document, which recommended the full implementation of the 2001 Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All its Aspects as the key element in promoting long-term security and in creating conditions for the sustainable development of many developing countries, especially those in Africa. Furthermore, my delegation supports national efforts geared at complementing those at the subregional and international levels. Nigeria invites other Members of the United Nations to follow the example of ECOWAS in confronting the menace of illicit small arms trafficking in their various regions.

However, my delegation must underline its extreme disappointment over the inconclusive outcome of the first United Nations Conference to Review Progress Made in the Implementation of the Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects in July this year, and particularly its failure to agree on a final document, in spite of the overwhelming support for it that emerged at the Review Conference in June 2006. Not withstanding that failure, we believe that all of us should be determined to move ahead.

For that reason, we strongly support the draft resolution on small arms and light weapons jointly sponsored by Japan, Colombia and South Africa. We are particularly delighted that recognition was accorded in the draft resolution to the need to convene the Biennial Meeting of States by 2008 to assess the implementation of the Programme of Action. By so doing, we will not only have overcome one of the major obstacles that led to the collapse of the last Review Conference, but will also have succeeded in ensuring an effective follow-up to the review process. My delegation therefore endorses the draft resolution and will join it as a co-sponsor. We also call for similar support from all delegations in this Committee.

Nigeria welcomes the initiative towards an eventual elaboration of an international arms trade treaty. It has come at an auspicious moment, when disarmament is at a crossroads. We reiterate our support for the initiative based on the expectation that such a treaty would establish a common international standard on arms transfers, regulate the international trade in arms and ensure their non-diversion to unauthorized end users. We shall work closely with interested delegations for the success of that goal, and we invite other delegations to join in that noble course.

The Chairperson: Several representatives have asked to speak in exercise of the right of reply.

May I remind delegations that the number of interventions in the exercise of the right of reply for any delegation at a given meeting should be limited to two per item. The first intervention in the exercise of the right of reply for any delegation on any item at a given meeting should be limited to 10 minutes, and the second intervention should be limited to five minutes.

I now call those representatives who wish to speak in exercise of the right of reply.

Mr. Vasiliev (Russian Federation) (*spoke in Russian*): I have a brief statement to make. We would like to exercise our right of reply regarding the statement made on 13 October by the representative of the Republic of Moldova concerning the uncontrolled production and proliferation of small arms and light weapons in the Transdniestrian Moldovan Republic and the alleged flow of Russian small arms and light weapons into the conflict in that region.

I draw attention to the fact that, as of 1 December 2005, the European Union's monitoring group has been in official operation on the Ukraine-Moldova border. It seeks, inter alia, to observe and monitor the border, with particular attention to the Transdniestria sector. The group has yet to observe any widespread smuggling of weapons, ammunition, explosives, narcotics, or psychotropic or radioactive substances across the border, concerning which the group reports periodically to the European Union, Ukraine and Moldova.

Recently, in its September session in Kishinev this year, Mr. David Wood, the Project Coordinator of the British non-governmental organization Saferworld,

submitted a report to the South Eastern Europe Clearinghouse for the Control of Small Arms and Light Weapons. The report was drafted on the basis of a consultative meeting with representatives of the Government of Moldova and of Transdniestria. The conclusion of the experts was that illicit transfers of weapons took place up to 2001; but not since.

The same conclusion was also drawn regarding the manufacture of small arms and light weapons in the mid-1990s, aimed at maintaining the security forces of Transdniestria. According to research, more than 4,000 units of small arms and light weapons are held by the civilian population of Transdniestria. The total number of firearms victims in Transdniestria in 2005 was 15 people. We should bear in mind that, according to the same report, of the total of 113,000 weapons held by civilians in Moldova, more than 53,000 are held illicitly.

As regards the assertion concerning the flow of firearms from the arsenals of Russian peacekeepers and small groups of Russian forces in Transdniestria, the monitoring recently carried out by the Ministry of Defence and by the Russian accounting office did not identify any such fact.

We feel that the most reliable guarantee regarding the dissemination of small arms and light weapons in that conflict area is a speedy solution, which Russia is actively calling for. We feel that the plan we have proposed to settle the situation should enjoy the support of the Moldovan leadership.

Mr. Kim Kwang Il (Democratic People's Republic of Korea): The delegation of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea rejects the allegations concerning the Democratic People's Republic of Korea made the day before yesterday by the United States delegation.

Our nuclear test is entirely attributable to the United States nuclear threat, sanctions and pressure. The Democratic People's Republic of Korea has exerted every possible effort to settle the nuclear issue through dialogue and negotiation, prompted by its sincere desire to realize the denuclearization of the Korean peninsula. However, the United States responded to our patient and sincere efforts and magnanimity with sanctions and blockade.

The Democratic People's Republic of Korea was compelled to substantially prove its possession of nuclear weapons to protect its sovereignty and right to existence from the daily-mounting danger of war from the United States. The delegation of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea would like to stress again that, although it conducted the nuclear test because of the United States, it remains unchanged in its will to denuclearize the peninsula through dialogue and negotiation.

Mr. Tulbure (Republic of Moldova): I, too, will be very brief. I would like to thank the representative of the Russian Federation for the information provided and to say the following.

Recently, the press confirmed the information provided by our Russian friend that Russian arms dumps in Moldova had been inspected by a group of generals and officers from the Russian Ministry of Defence. According to them, the group did not find any cases of weapons or armaments disappearing and no inappropriate conditions in the maintenance of armaments. It was also said that 21,000 units of arms remain stocked in Transdniestria, Moldova.

In that context, Moldova draws international attention to the fact that the data provided by the Russian side can be confirmed by no other source. The real content of the armament stocks is also not known. In spite of repeated reports drafted by the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE), the Moldovan Government and the OSCE mission in Moldova, the Transdniestrian arms dumps continue to be inaccessible for any international inspection whatsoever. Hence, neither the Moldovan Government nor the international community, represented by the competent international organizations, has any real data about the number and lists of ammunitions stocked in Transdniestria, Moldova.

In those circumstances, we consider irrelevant the information based on Russian sources, and we reiterate the need to conduct an international inspection of the Russian Federation's arms dumps situated in Moldova in order to keep transparent the process of preserving and withdrawing armaments.

As to the need ultimately to settle the conflict, we are in total agreement and are fighting to settle it, but the main obstacle to the final settlement to the conflict in Transdniestria is the presence of the Russian troops that are illegally deployed there. Russia has become not a part of the process of settlement, but a part of the problem. That is the situation today.

In the near future, we will invite delegations to watch a film — produced not by Moldovans, but by French journalists — about the armaments in Transdniestria, and representatives will have the opportunity to follow events by themselves.

The Chairperson: We have thus concluded the list of speakers on conventional weapons.

We will now proceed with the introduction of related draft resolutions and decisions.

Mr. Wensley (South Africa): I have the privilege to take the floor on behalf of the three coordinators of the annual so-called omnibus draft resolution — Colombia, Japan and South Africa — to introduce this year's draft resolution, entitled "The illicit trade in small arms and light weapons in all its aspects".

Since my delegation did not deliver a prepared statement during the thematic debate on conventional weapons, given our understanding that this was intended not to be a repeat of the First Committee's general debate, allow me to elaborate on the intention behind the draft resolution.

At a time when we are encountering one setback after the other in achieving concrete progress in the field of disarmament, non-proliferation and arms control, the challenge before us remains the continued commitment to strive for peace, stability and enduring security. Almost all delegations that mentioned the disappointment of the Conference to Review Progress Made in the Implementation of the Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects, during both the general and the thematic debates, emphasized that our failure to reach agreement on a draft outcome document in no way diminishes the continued relevance of the Programme of Action.

As such, the annual draft omnibus draft resolution maps out our priorities and continues to act as the vehicle for implementing or operationalizing the Programme of Action. The follow-up section of the Programme addresses two substantive elements — examining the feasibility of developing an instrument to identify and trace illicit small arms and light weapons, as well as further steps to prevent, combat and eradicate illicit brokering.

As we are all aware, we now have that international tracing instrument and the onus is on us to take practical steps to implement that instrument. The first of those, we believe, is to provide the Department for Disarmament Affairs with the name and contact details of the national point or points of contact, and of our national marking practices. It is for that reason that the draft resolution calls upon States to implement those first steps. The draft resolution also recalls the establishment of the group of governmental experts on illicit brokering that will soon commence its work.

Given the importance of section II of the Programme of Action in terms of preventing, combating and eradicating the illicit trade at the national, regional and global levels, as well as section III on international cooperation and assistance, the implementation of our 2001 undertakings in those areas is also highlighted.

In our statement in the First Committee's general debate, South Africa emphasized "the necessity to maintain the relevance of the consultative process on the implementation of the Programme of Action, in particular the agreed system of the biennial meetings of States" (*A/C.1/61/PV.4, p. 18*). Accordingly, the draft resolution calls for the next such meeting of States to consider our implementation of the Programme of Action to be held no later than 2008.

The text of the draft resolution has been issued as document A/C.1/61/L.15. It is our hope that it will attract a large number of sponsors and that it will again be adopted by consensus.

Mr. Shein (Myanmar): My delegation has the honour and privilege to introduce the draft resolution entitled "Nuclear disarmament", contained in document A/C.1/61/L.39.

We believe that nuclear disarmament should be accorded the highest priority on the international agenda of arms control and disarmament. Events and developments over the past few days reinforce that view. Given such developments around the world, it is now more urgent than ever to focus our attention and efforts on effectively meeting the challenge of nuclear weapons.

We strongly hold the view that the continued existence of nuclear weapons poses a grave threat to mankind. The only defence against a nuclear catastrophe is the total elimination of those weapons. We are firmly convinced that the goal of establishing a world free of nuclear weapons can be achieved through

concrete practical steps stemming from the genuine political will of all of us. That conviction is reflected in the preambular paragraphs of the draft resolution.

The draft resolution is comprehensive in scope and encompasses crucial interim steps for reducing the danger of nuclear weapons, which are reflected in operative paragraphs 4, 6 and 8.

The draft resolution enjoys the co-sponsorship of the countries of the Association of South-East Asian Nations and many countries of the Non-Aligned Movement (NAM). For the past several years, it has been adopted by the First Committee and subsequently by the General Assembly by a large majority of votes. My delegation sincerely hopes that the draft resolution will continue to enjoy the co-sponsorship of many NAM countries, as well as the support of a vast majority of Member States.

In conclusion, my delegation should like to seek the valuable support of Member States for the draft resolution, as in the past, and calls on them to vote in favour of it.

Mr. Duncan (United Kingdom): I have the honour to introduce the draft resolution contained in document A/C.1/61/L.55, entitled "Towards an arms trade treaty: establishing common international standards for the import, export and transfer of conventional arms", on behalf of the seven original co-authors: Argentina, Australia, Costa Rica, Finland, Japan, Kenya and the United Kingdom. Let me say at the outset how much we have appre[illegible]nd value the support of the 91 Members of the Un[illegible]tions that have so far agreed to sponsor the draft reso[illegible]

The idea of an arms trade treaty is not new, [illegible] it may help friends and colleagues if I were to say [illegible]w words on what lies behind the decision of the sev[illegible] authors to bring that proposal to the United Natio[illegible] will also explain why the United Kingdom beli[illegible] that the time has come for us all to engage in [illegible] informed discussion on whether and how to develop common international standards on the import, export and transfer of conventional arms. We, the co-authors, believe that such discussion can assist our collective efforts to promote peace, and security, and thus contribute to our endeavours to promote, as the United Nations Charter has it, social progress and better standards of life in larger freedom.

The moral case for an arms trade treaty is well known and has been made more eloquently than I could do here, most notably by Nobel Peace Prize laureates, civil society and, more recently, by spiritual leaders drawn from all the world's major faiths. We, the co-authors, share the concern about the human cost and on the wider detrimental effect of irresponsible arms transfers, for example on sustainable development.

All of us in this room, however, recognize that the threat to international peace and security posed by conventional weapons is not by their intrinsic nature. We also recognize the inherent and fundamental rights of States to provide for their defence and security. The first obligation of the nation State is to protect its citizens, and that is clearly set out in the United Nations Charter.

The United Kingdom is one of the world's major arms producers. The arms industry forms an important part of our economy and many thousands of ordinary people depend upon those companies for their employment. My colleagues would understand that the United Kingdom has come to its position of supporting the need for an arms trade treaty only after considerable thought and consultation.

The issues involved are indeed complex. While there is already a fair degree of commonality on the criteria and norms which arms manufacturing and exporting countries apply in their national controls, it will be a challenge to develop common international standards. But it is the firm view of the co-authors that we should begin that discussion and strive towards achieving that aim.

Moreover, we believe that it must be a discussion which involves both consumers and producers, and that the United Nations is the most suitable forum for the discussion. The alternative — simply increasing and widening cooperation among suppliers — would not, in our view, be appropriate. The co-authors are pleased to note that many of the emerging arms suppliers share this view regarding the need for a more comprehensive and inclusive approach and that they have indicated their support by volunteering to join in sponsoring the draft resolution.

Draft resolution A/C.1/61/L.55, which the co-authors submitted last week, followed extensive consultations with a wide number of United Nations Member States over many months. Our watchword

throughout has been transparency and inclusiveness. The co-authors, via the United Kingdom's overseas missions, sought views from almost all United Nations capitals on two separate occasions. In Geneva, an informal group drawn from a representative cross-section of regions helped the co-authors develop their ideas before the first draft text was put forward, on 24 July.

During the past two weeks in New York, the co-authors have held two open-ended meetings during which we listened carefully to the concerns of others. Following each meeting, we have attempted, without compromising our essential principles, to respond to those concerns in good faith, and have adjusted the language of the text. It is not our intention to use the draft resolution as an attempt to trap nations into agreement on an arms trade treaty. I would like to make clear again that our aim is to launch a discussion. The co-authors believe that the position of those who remain agnostic about an arms trade treaty is protected by the current text.

In conclusion, let me, on behalf of the co-authors, again express our thanks to the many States throughout the world that have joined us in sponsoring the draft resolution and have spoken up in support in the debates. They include traditional producers, emerging suppliers and consumers, thus reinforcing the view that the time has come to begin a serious, open and transparent discussion on the feasibility, scope and parameters of an arms trade treaty. Our sincere hope is that all colleagues will support this initiative.

The Chairperson: I call on the representative of Sweden to introduce draft resolution A/C.1/61/L.18.

Ms. Bonnier (Sweden): I am taking the floor to introduce draft resolution A/C.1/61/L.18, on the Convention on Prohibitions or Restrictions on the Use of Certain Conventional Weapons Which May Be Deemed to Be Excessively Injurious or to Have Indiscriminate Effects (CCW). I am doing so on behalf of almost 50 countries — and the number is still growing. My delegation is very grateful to all of the sponsoring States for their support, and I hope that even more will join us in the coming weeks.

The purpose of the CCW is to ban or restrict the use of specific types of weapons that cause excessive injury or unnecessary suffering to combatants or that affect civilians indiscriminately. This is as pertinent and pressing as ever. In only a few weeks' time, States parties to the CCW will meet to review the scope, operation, status and implementation of the Convention and all of its Protocols. That forthcoming Third Review Conference will be a timely opportunity to take stock of important achievements over the past five years within the framework Convention. It will also coincide with a significant event: the entry into force, on 12 November, of the Convention's Protocol V on Explosive Remnants of War.

But the Review Conference should also look forward. The Group of Governmental Experts has agreed on a number of important recommendations to the Review Conference, including a plan of action to promote the universality of the Convention and its Protocols. The issue of mines other than anti-personnel mines has been under serious consideration — I might even say negotiations — for several years. Work has continued on the implementation of existing principles of humanitarian law and possible further measures to prevent munitions from becoming explosive remnants of war. The need to promote compliance with the Convention has been recognized and is being addressed.

The draft resolution which I am introducing today is an expression of support for the CCW process. The specific substantive issues will, of course, have to be addressed by the States parties at the Review Conference.

Today, the CCW has 100 States parties. Let me take this opportunity to call upon all States that have not yet done so to become parties to the Convention and all of its Protocols, including the important amendment that extended the scope of the Convention to include situations of non-international conflict.

I am confident that the draft resolution will again receive the full support of the Committee and that as with similar texts in previous years, it will be adopted without a vote.

The Chairperson: I call now on the representative of Germany to introduce draft resolutions A/C.1/61/L.26 and A/C.1/61/L.37.

Mr. Brasack (Germany): My delegation has the honour today to introduce two draft resolutions. I am introducing the first — draft resolution A/C.1/61/L.26, entitled "Problems arising from the accumulation of conventional ammunition stockpiles in surplus" — also on behalf of the delegation of France as co-initiator.

The draft resolution does not deal with a new issue. The sixth preambular paragraph recalls decision 59/515 of 3 December 2004 and resolution 60/74 of 8 December 2005, both of which were adopted by consensus. Resolution 60/74 decided to include the issue in the agenda of the current session.

Our intention is to give new but modest impetus to the recommendation in paragraph 27 of the so-called Thalmann report, document A/60/88, of 27 June 2005, that "the issue of small arms and light weapons ammunition be addressed in a comprehensive manner as part of a separate process conducted within the framework of the United Nations".

Changes to last year's resolution include moving the quote from the Thalmann consensus report from the preambular to the operative part of the present draft resolution and calling for the establishment of a group of governmental experts on the issue.

We express our appreciation to the Secretary-General for his report on the topic (A/61/118 and Add.1) and to the States parties that have submitted reports containing information about their national practices and conventional ammunition stockpiles in surplus. We are also grateful for the support that was voiced in the open-ended informal consultations on the issue held by the delegations of France and Germany on Friday, 13 October. It is our hope that the draft resolution will continue to enjoy consensus as did similar texts in 2004 and 2005.

Let me now come to the second draft resolution, which was initiated by Germany alone. On behalf of the sponsors, my delegation has the honour to introduce to the First Committee, as it has done in past sessions, a draft resolution entitled "Consolidation of peace through practical disarmament measures", contained this year in document A/C.1/61/L.37.

We express our appreciation to the Secretary-General for his report on this topic, which is contained in document A/61/288, as well as to the Member States which have sponsored similar draft resolutions in the past and those that are sponsoring this year's text. Germany has submitted these draft resolutions biennially since 1996. They have enjoyed considerable support ever since, leading to adoption by consensus. In 2004 it had 123 sponsors, and was again adopted without a vote both in the First Committee and in the General Assembly, as resolution 59/82.

The concept of practical disarmament goes back to former Secretary-General Boutros-Ghali and his "*Agenda for Peace*" (A/47/277). Since then, it has been given increasing attention by the international community. Its basic idea is to focus the First Committee's attention, in a more integrated manner, on the relevance of practical disarmament measures for the consolidation of peace in conflict and post-conflict environments. As experience has shown, measures such as the control of small arms and light weapons including their ammunition, demining, conversion and the demobilization and reintegration of former combatants are an integral part of effective conflict resolution and post-conflict rehabilitation.

The draft resolution combines a comprehensive and integrated approach comprising a wide variety of aspects, from disarmament to peacekeeping matters, in an attempt to achieve tangible results within a foreseeable time frame. It is practical, operational and free of charge to the United Nations budget. The implementation of this operational resolution has in many cases led to results with direct impact on the lives of people in countries affected by conflict.

Following a wish expressed by the Secretary-General in his 1997 report on practical disarmament (A/52/289), a Group of Interested States on practical disarmament measures was established in March 1998, in an effort to strengthen international cooperation on the issues I have mentioned and to promote concrete projects in the area of practical disarmament, especially as proposed or undertaken by affected States themselves. The Group has been doing practical work by providing support and ensuring financing for numerous projects, including workshops, policy studies, turn-in programmes for small arms and light weapons held by civilian populations and control measures for those kinds of arms, to mention only a few. Beginning in 2005, the Group also invited the participation of representatives of major civil society and non-governmental organizations actively involved in the fight against the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons.

This year's draft resolution is intended to maintain the momentum generated by its predecessors and to encourage the activities of the Group of Interested States. It is also aimed at keeping the Group operational and focusing it on matching demands by some Member States with the willingness of others to support projects proposed by them. In large part, it

follows the wording of the previous resolution. We have mainly updated the references to documents and meetings. We have also slightly changed the wording of paragraph 4, concerning the task description of the Group of Interested States, in order to focus more on its operational, as compared to its deliberative, character. In order to highlight the comprehensive approach of the draft resolution and for reasons of practicality on the ground, we have also made specific reference to the ammunition of small arms and light weapons, which should also be collected and destroyed, in response to requests by Member States in post-conflict situations.

With those explanatory remarks, I put this draft resolution A/C.1/61/L.37 before the members of the First Committee. Consultations with fellow sponsors and other delegations were conducted prior to the introduction of the draft resolution, in an effort to again secure consensus on the draft resolution. Those consultations took place on Thursday, 12 October

My delegation is confident that, in keeping with tradition, the draft resolution will continue to receive the support of the large majority of Member States. More than 80 States have thus far signed on to the list of sponsors. We would like to invite all Member States to follow suit.

The Chairperson: I now give the floor to the representative of Mali, who will introduce draft resolution A/C.1/61/L.25.

Mr. Mallé (Mali) (*spoke in French*): I have taken the floor to express my delegation's views regarding the problem of small arms, as well as to introduce draft resolution A/C.1/61/L.25, on small arms, on behalf of the members of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS).

Allow me, at the outset, to convey to you, Madam, the warm congratulations of the delegation of Mali on your election to the chairmanship of the First Committee; our congratulations go also to the other members of the Bureau.

The effectiveness of the fight against the proliferation, circulation and trafficking in small arms and light weapons is in fact measured against the efforts taken at the national level. In that regard, Mali plays a crucial role in the fight against the proliferation of small arms. It was among the first countries to establish a national commission to combat the proliferation of small arms — through its decree No. 87-304 P-RM, of 14 November 1996. The national commission, which is the national focal point for the 2001 Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects, organizes annual awareness campaigns in the interior of the country concerning the problem of small arms, so as to involve people in the fight against this scourge. It also carries out training exercises for public officials and representatives of civil society. The Commission also includes decentralized local commissions at the level of administrative regions.

The national strategy to combat the proliferation of small arms and light weapons combines mandatory actions with awareness-raising campaigns. As part of their mandates, the customs service and the armed and security forces also contribute to efforts to combat the proliferation of small arms.

In order to demonstrate its political will and commitment to further combat the illicit proliferation of small arms and light weapons, Mali has destroyed a significant quantity of its stockpiled mines, retaining only a negligible quantity for the purposes of demonstration and military training exercises.

On the legislative front, law No. 49 P-RM of 27 September 2000, regarding the implementation of the Convention on the Prohibition of the Use, Stockpiling, Production and Transfer of Anti-personnel Mines and on Their Destruction, and its implementing decree No. 55-103 P-RM, of 15 November 2000, form the basis for the implementation of the Ottawa Convention.

With regard to small arms and light weapons, law No. 01-115, of 18 July 2001, relating to Mali's customs service, prohibits the import or export of goods that could pose a threat to public order, including weapons. In addition, Mali has adopted law No. 04-50, of 12 November 2004, which requires the registration of weapons and ammunition, in an effort to better adapt our legal framework to the country's current situation. The adoption of that law was based on the desire of the authorities to respond to the need to update national laws and harmonize them with those at the regional and subregional level, in line with the Programme of Action and the Bamako Declaration.

Civil society, which is also involved in the fight against the proliferation of small arms, has organized a

national arms control committee. In that regard, it is supporting the efforts of the Government by raising awareness about the proliferation of small arms.

Mali believes that in order to be effective all conventions aimed at regulating the international arms trade should take into account the following aspects: control over arms transfers overall, and in particular to armed non-State actors; control over possession by individuals; technical and financial support for national commissions; follow-up to the implementation of the measures recommended in the annual reports of national commissions; biennial meetings and review conferences; the record of violations of international humanitarian law and crimes against humanity; and arms brokering and tracing.

At the subregional level, the efforts made by ECOWAS in combating small arms and light weapons are known throughout the world. Among those efforts was the replacement of the Moratorium on the Importation, Exportation and Manufacture of Small Arms and Light Weapons in West Africa by the Convention on Small Arms and Light Weapons, Their Ammunition and Other Related Materials, which was adopted at Abuja, Nigeria, on 14 June 2006. The adoption of that legally binding Convention marks significant progress in the ECOWAS region and constitutes a decisive step in combating the proliferation of small arms. The delegation of Mali would like to take this opportunity to call for the assistance of the international community in implementing the Convention.

In addition to the Convention, I should also like to point to the establishment of the ECOWAS Small Arms Control Programme, which was launched at Bamako on 16 June 2006 and which replaced the Programme for Coordination and Assistance for Security and Development. The new Programme, whose headquarters are in Bamako, aims at strengthening the capacity to control the circulation of small arms in the ECOWAS region.

On behalf of the States members of ECOWAS, the delegation of Mali would like to introduce, under sub-item (r) of agenda item 90, the draft resolution entitled "Assistance to States for curbing the illicit traffic in small arms and light weapons and collecting them" (A/C.1/61/L.25). Mali traditionally introduces draft resolutions on this subject on behalf of the States members of ECOWAS. This year there is no change with regard to the substance of the text. We have merely updated the draft resolution in the light of the past year's major developments, specifically the replacement of the Moratorium on the Importation, Exportation and Manufacture of Small Arms and Light Weapons in West Africa by the Convention on Small Arms and Light Weapons, Their Ammunition and Other Related Materials. The new instrument illustrates the political will of ECOWAS States to intensify the fight against the proliferation of small arms and light weapons through the adoption of more binding measures.

The operative part of the draft resolution encourages the international community to support the implementation of the Convention, and the preambular part welcomes the launching of the Small Arms Control Programme. Those are some of the changes made to update the draft resolution.

Given the scope of the devastation caused by the proliferation of small arms and light weapons, we invite all countries to become sponsors of the draft resolution. We also ask that it be adopted by consensus. We thank all the countries that have already become sponsors.

The Chairperson: I now give the floor to the representative of Sierra Leone to introduce draft resolution A/C.1/61/L.17.

Mr. Rowe (Sierra Leone): On behalf of Sierra Leone, I have the honour to introduce the draft resolution contained in document A/C.1/61/L.17, entitled "Declaration of the Fourth Disarmament Decade (2008-2018)", for the consideration of the First Committee under agenda item 90.

This is a new draft resolution only because it is not one of those that are considered annually, biennially or triennially. However, the idea, and the need to declare a disarmament decade, are not new. As we explained in our note verbale to all Member States on 6 October, the draft resolution is being presented against the background of the poor performance in the field of arms control, disarmament and non-proliferation that we have witnessed in recent years. In the general debate both in the plenary meetings of the General Assembly and in this Committee, delegations, one after another, spoke of a protracted stalemate, heightened disappointment, impasse and a series of failures. As one delegation put it, the international community failed to make anything at all of recent

opportunities to make the world more secure through multilateral action on non-proliferation and disarmament. It was the representative of Norway who was more forthright when he said, "We shall have to change that" (*A/C.1/61/PV.2, p. 5*).

In his presentation to the First Committee on Monday, 16 October, Mr. Hans Blix, Chairman of the Weapons of Mass Destruction Commission, summarized the report of that Commission in these words:

> "Its central message is that the global process of arms control and disarmament, which has stagnated in the last decade, must be revived and pursued in parallel with the efforts to prevent the spread of weapons of mass destruction to further States and to terrorists." (*A/C.1/61/PV.14, p. 1*)

The draft resolution that has been circulated as document A/C.1/61/L.17 is also based on the Secretary-General's assessment that now is the time to bring back disarmament into the limelight of the international agenda, and on his call for a more concerted international effort to build a common understanding of the most immediate nuclear threats, in order to avoid a cascade of nuclear proliferation. The draft resolution would have the General Assembly recognize the urgent need to mobilize concerted and more intensive global efforts to reverse the current trend and underline the significant role that the fourth disarmament decade could play in that regard.

I should like to reiterate that the draft resolution is not controversial. It is not prescriptive as to the programme of activities and priorities of the proposed decade. It is essentially a recommendation to commence a process. As clearly stated in paragraph 1, the draft resolution would have the General Assembly request the Secretary-General to seek the views of Member States and appropriate international bodies, as well as non-governmental and civil society organizations, concerning the proposed decade. On the basis of those views and the experience of the previous Decades — in particular the Second Decade — the Secretary-General would also be requested to prepare an outline, in the form of a draft working paper, for the first two years of the proposed decade.

Of course, there are precedents for that approach and for the language of the operative paragraphs of the draft resolution. It will be recalled that the elements of the declaration of the 1980s as the Second Disarmament Decade were prepared by the Disarmament Commission on the basis of a preliminary outline provided by the Secretariat.

Regarding the time frame of the proposed decade, it appears that 2010 would be the logical commencement date of the decade. However, the delegation of Sierra Leone strongly believes that, in view of the state of the international security environment, and taking into account the experience of previous Decades, the proposed Fourth Decade should commence as soon as possible. We cannot afford to spend three long years making preparations for it. As I said, we have precedents for that. We can go back and look at the previous Decades and see what we can learn from the programmes that were adopted by the General Assembly in pursuit of the objectives of those Decades.

The draft resolution is open for further sponsorship. My delegation trusts that it will receive the support of the entire membership of the First Committee, and subsequently that of the General Assembly.

The Chairperson: As no other delegation wishes to introduce draft resolutions pertaining to conventional weapons issues, I propose that we now invite today's guest speakers to make their statements.

As previously mentioned, we have as panellists the Chairperson of the Advisory Board on Disarmament Matters, the President of the Conference on Disarmament, the Chairperson of the United Nations Disarmament Commission and the Director of the United Nations Institute for Disarmament Research.

I will now suspend the meeting in order to continue our discussion in an informal setting.

The meeting was suspended at 11 a.m. and resumed at 12.25 p.m.

Organization of work

The Chairperson: It now seems likely that we will have to use the time slot allocated to us on Friday, 20 October, and I would kindly ask representatives to plan their activities accordingly. We will use that meeting to catch up with whatever thematic statements and introductions of draft resolutions that remain after tomorrow's meeting. I will also provide members with guidance as to our work and procedures for next week.

I now give the floor to the Secretary to make an announcement.

Mr. Sareva (Secretary of the First Committee): First, I would like to remind representatives of the invitation to a lunch-time panel presentation on the theme "Linking development and small arms: policy development, field programming and research", to be held today, 18 October, from 1.15 p.m. to 2.45 p.m. in Conference Room A. The panel has been organized by the Permanent Mission of Switzerland and the Quaker United Nations Office.

The Chairperson: Before I adjourn the meeting, our colleague from the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) has requested me to convey to the Committee his appreciation for the Committee's cooperation in adjusting this morning's meeting so that the FAO could prepare for the World Food Day event that will take place in this room at 1.15. He would also like me to inform all delegations that the one-hour World Food Day event will be followed by a luncheon, compliments of FAO, in the cafeteria on the ground floor of the Secretariat building. All are invited.

The meeting rose at 12.30 p.m.

United Nations A/C.1/61/PV.17

General Assembly
Sixty-first session

Official Records

First Committee
17th meeting
Thursday, 19 October 2006, 10 a.m.
New York

Chairperson: Mrs. Juul ..... (Norway)

The meeting was called to order at 10.10 a.m.

Agenda items 82 to 97 (*continued*)

Thematic discussion on item subjects and introduction and consideration of all draft resolutions submitted under all disarmament and international security agenda items

The Chairperson: This morning we will first allow the four remaining speakers to address the panellists, who were generous enough to again allocate some time in their busy schedules to the Committee. I shall also give an opportunity to those delegations that wish to introduce draft resolutions to do so. Afterwards, we will have a follow-up of draft resolutions adopted by the Committee at its previous session, including the presentation of a report by the Under-Secretary-General for Disarmament Affairs, which will immediately be followed by presentations on issues pertaining to nuclear weapons and small arms and light weapons by representatives of four non-governmental organizations. All of those discussions will proceed in an informal mode. If time permits, the Committee will also continue with its thematic discussion on the remaining subjects and the introduction of draft resolutions.

I now give the floor to the representative of Egypt to introduce draft resolution A/C.1/61/L.1 and A/C.1/61/L.2.

Mr. Shamaa (Egypt) (*spoke in Arabic*): Egypt supports efforts to establish nuclear-weapon-free zones in order to achieve our goals of nuclear non-proliferation. Egypt also supports and calls for universality for the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT), so as to achieve the Treaty's goals and strengthen the non-proliferation regime that has been established. In that context, our country would like to intensify efforts to ensure that the six-party talks regarding the Korean Peninsula result in the establishment of a nuclear-weapon-free zone there. We also call on the Democratic People's Republic of Korea to fulfil its non-proliferation obligations and place all its nuclear facilities under the comprehensive safeguards regime of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA).

On behalf of the member States of the League of Arab States, the delegation of Egypt would like to introduce the draft resolution entitled "The risk of nuclear proliferation in the Middle East", document A/C.1/61/L.2. This draft resolution aims at strengthening the system established by the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons to prevent its collapse. It underscores the dangers of the existence of nuclear installations in the Middle East that are not under the IAEA safeguards regime. It also calls upon Israel to accede to the Non-Proliferation Treaty, so as to achieve the universality of the Treaty in the Middle East and strengthen peace and security in the Middle East. Our hope is that all countries and States support the NPT and work to realize the goal of international peace, stability and security in the Middle East.

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In order to achieve the goals of nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation, we would also like to introduce the draft resolution entitled "Establishment of a nuclear-weapon-free zone in the region of the Middle East", document A/C.1/61/L.1. This draft resolution calls for the establishment of a nuclear-weapon-free zone in the Middle East. We wish to emphasize the need for the parties involved to take the necessary steps to remove all nuclear weapons from the Middle East and to place all nuclear activities in the region under the IAEA safeguards regime. The draft resolution also calls upon all States, pending the establishment of the zone, not to develop, produce, test or otherwise acquire nuclear weapons or permit the stationing of such weapons on their territories.

Our efforts are motivated by the belief that the grave challenges associated with the NPT system are such that we need to take immediate and effective steps to establish a nuclear-weapon-free zone in the Middle East. We therefore once again call upon all States, especially those that are responsible for promoting international peace and security, to take concrete steps to create a nuclear-weapon-free zone in the Middle East, for that is a goal that all Member States share. We hope that consensus will continue and be further strengthened.

The Chairperson: I now give the floor to the representative of Argentina to introduce draft resolution A/C.1/61/L.40.

Mrs. Martinic (Argentina) (*spoke in Spanish*): I have the honour to introduce draft resolution A/C.1/61/L.40, entitled "Information on confidence-building measures in the field of conventional arms", on behalf of the delegations listed in that document and those that have become sponsors since last Wednesday. As members will recall, the Argentine initiative to introduce this draft resolution is part of an effort to relaunch the dialogue on this issue that began during the 2000, 2001 and 2003 substantive sessions of the Disarmament Commission.

Resolutions 59/92 and 60/82, regarding information on confidence-building measures in the field of conventional arms, were adopted with consensus and were co-sponsored by 105 delegations. That voluntary display of approval illustrates the broad support generated by the subject. In accordance with paragraph 4 of those resolutions, the Secretary-General has established an electronic database containing information provided by Member States to the Department for Disarmament Affairs. Draft resolution A/C.1/61/L.40 therefore reflects that fact, while also welcoming the establishment of the database. It also calls upon the Secretary-General to keep the database updated.

In addition, in an effort to continue to promote the rationalization of the work of the First Committee, the draft resolution decides to biennialize the consideration of this draft resolution.

Argentina would once again like to express its gratitude for the wide support given to this initiative. We call on all delegations to consider becoming sponsors of the draft resolution. We hope that it will once again be adopted by consensus.

The Chairperson: We will now allow the remaining speakers to address our panellists. I now suspend the meeting in order that we may proceed with an interactive discussion in an informal mode.

The meeting was suspended at 10.25 a.m. and resumed at 1 p.m.

The Chairperson: There seems to be no time left for the Committee to continue its thematic debate today. I therefore propose to adjourn the meeting. The Committee will move on to its thematic discussion on all remaining issues, including the introduction of related draft resolutions and decisions, tomorrow. I am aware that many delegations have now waited for several days to speak and introduce draft resolutions. I thank them for their patience and wish to assure them that their turn will come tomorrow. I will, however, need the assistance of members: the more concise their statements are, the better the chances that indeed everyone will have an opportunity to speak tomorrow.

I now give the floor to the Secretary of the Committee to make a brief announcement.

Mr. Sareva (Secretary of the First Committee): Just a reminder, again, that there will be a meeting this afternoon at 4 p.m. in Conference Room A for interested delegations. We will have informal consultations on the issue of the development of the First Committee website.

The Chairperson: The Committee will meet again tomorrow at 10 a.m. sharp in Conference Room 4.

The meeting rose at 1.05 p.m.

United Nations A/C.1/61/PV.18

General Assembly
Sixty-first session

Official Records

First Committee
18th meeting
Friday, 20 October 2006, 10 a.m.
New York

President: Mrs. Juul ..... (Norway)

The meeting was called to order at 10.05 a.m.

Agenda items 82 to 97 (*continued*)

Thematic discussion on item subjects and introduction and consideration of all draft resolutions submitted under all disarmament and international security agenda items

The Chairperson: This morning, the Committee needs to conclude its thematic discussion of the remaining item subjects — other disarmament measures and international security; regional disarmament and security; and disarmament machinery — and the introduction of related draft resolutions.

Before we do so, I intend to give the floor to remaining delegations that have requested to make statements on issues related to nuclear weapons. We have quite a long list of delegations wishing to make statements and introduce draft resolutions. Consequently, I would urge delegations to be as brief as possible when making their interventions on the remaining issues.

As stated, I will first give the floor to delegations that have requested the floor to make statements on nuclear-weapons issues.

I call on the representative of Uzbekistan to introduce draft resolution A/C.1/61/L.54/Rev.1.

Mr. Vohidov (Uzbekistan) (*spoke in Russian*): On behalf of the five States of Central Asia, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan, I wish to introduce draft resolution A/C.1/61/L.54/Rev.1, entitled "Establishment of a nuclear-weapon-free zone in Central Asia". Since the initiative to establish such a zone was first proposed, in 1993, a number of relevant resolutions and decisions have been adopted by the General Assembly. The consensus adoption of those documents illustrates the international community's support for the initiative of the Central Asian States as a genuine step towards global disarmament and non-proliferation.

This year, the States of Central Asia, together with all other United Nations Member States, wanted to commemorate one of the most important events in recent years in the area of multilateral disarmament and non-proliferation: the signing of the Treaty on a Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zone in Central Asia on 8 September 2006 in Semipalatinsk, Kazakhstan. We are pleased to note that, once again, the overwhelming majority of delegations have reaffirmed that establishing nuclear-weapon-free zones remains one of the most important elements in the strategy to strengthen the global process aimed at nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation.

The signing of the Treaty was welcomed in the outcome document of the Fourteenth Summit of Heads of State or Government of the Non-Aligned Movement, held in September 2006 at Havana, Cuba, and in the final communiqué of the Annual Coordination Meeting of Ministers for Foreign Affairs of Member States of

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the Organization of the Islamic Conference, adopted at United Nations Headquarters on 25 September 2006.

We wish to thank all United Nations Member States, States members of other nuclear-weapon-free zones, international organizations and non-governmental organizations that have commended our States for signing the Treaty on a Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zone in Central Asia. We also wish to thank the Secretary-General, the Department for Disarmament Affairs and the United Nations Regional Centre for Peace and Disarmament in Asia and the Pacific for their assistance in establishing a nuclear-weapon-free zone in Central Asia.

We are sincerely grateful to the United Nations experts, the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) and the various disarmament and security research centres, which generously shared their experience and knowledge with us as we formulated the text of the Treaty. We also express our gratitude to the Government of Japan, which has consistently lent support to the efforts of the States of Central Asia to establish this nuclear-weapon-free zone.

We regard the nuclear-weapon-free zone in Central Asia as an important contribution to the strengthening of the international nuclear non-proliferation regime and, in particular, to the establishment of machinery to prevent nuclear terrorism, bearing in mind the importance of the signing of the Treaty, which has declared yet another region to be a nuclear-weapon-free zone. We believe it is also important to retain this item on our agenda.

The delegation of Uzbekistan, on behalf of the five countries of Central Asia, would like to express its hope that draft resolution A/C.1/61/L.54/Rev.1, on the establishment of a nuclear-weapon-free zone in Central Asia, like other texts on this item in recent years, will be supported by all delegations.

Mr. Tokaev (Kazakhstan): My delegation fully aligns itself with the statement just delivered by the representative of Uzbekistan on behalf of the five Central Asian States on draft resolution A/C.1/61/L.54/Rev.1, entitled "Establishment of a nuclear-weapon-free zone in Central Asia". I would also like to highlight certain points on this important issue.

The Treaty on a Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zone in Central Asia was signed in Semipalatinsk, which was the site of nearly 500 nuclear explosions. Those explosions affected some 1.5 million people and turned vast areas into zones that will be dangerous for living for a long time to come.

As recently mentioned in the First Committee by the Under-Secretary-General for Disarmament Affairs, Mr. Tanaka, the signing of the Treaty creating a Central Asian nuclear-weapon-free zone marks a critical step in the evolution of these zones. It marks the first such zone to be created entirely north of the Equator, covering large areas where many nuclear weapons were once deployed (see A/C.1/61/PV.8).

By signing the nuclear-weapon-free zone Treaty in Semipalatinsk, the Central Asian States have made a joint contribution to the strengthening of peace and security on the basis of article VII of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT), the Principles and objectives for nuclear non-proliferation and disarmament adopted by the 1995 Review and Extension Conference of the Parties to the NPT, and the Final Document of the 2000 Review Conference of the Parties to the NPT, as well as the principles and objectives set out in the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty. Thereby, the entire region formally renewed its determined commitment to nuclear non-proliferation and disarmament.

Each party to the Semipalatinsk Treaty undertakes: not to conduct research on, develop, manufacture, stockpile or otherwise acquire, possess or have control over any nuclear weapon or other nuclear explosive device by any means, anywhere; not to seek or receive any assistance in research on, development, manufacture, stockpiling, acquisition, possession or obtaining control over any nuclear weapon or other nuclear explosive device; and not to take any action to assist or encourage the conduct of research on, development, manufacture, stockpiling, acquisition or possession of any nuclear weapon or other nuclear explosive device.

The Treaty is also an effective contribution to combating the most acute threats to peace and security — first and foremost international terrorism — and to preventing nuclear materials and technologies from falling into the hands of non-State actors, primarily terrorists. The parties to the Semipalatinsk Treaty, for the first time ever, undertake not to provide source or special fissionable material or equipment or material especially designed or prepared

for the processing, use or production of special fissionable material to any non-nuclear-weapon State, unless that State has concluded a comprehensive safeguards agreement with the International Atomic Energy Agency and an additional protocol.

The Semipalatinsk Treaty will not only facilitate the strengthening of the security of Central Asia, but will also be an important step in promoting regional confidence-building and cooperation, since the Treaty is the first multilateral agreement in the security area to bring together all five Central Asian countries. We are looking forward to working together to elaborate mechanisms of information exchange, verification procedures and the proper fulfilment of Treaty provisions.

Kazakhstan hopes that the draft resolution will be adopted by consensus in accordance with the common positive approach of all Member States towards the establishment of nuclear-weapon-free zones in the world.

The Chairperson: I now give the floor to the representative of Mongolia to introduce draft resolution A/C.1/61/L.53.

Mr. Cholsuren (Mongolia): I have the honour to introduce a biennial draft resolution entitled "Mongolia's international security and nuclear-weapon-free status" and contained in document A/C.1/61/L.53.

This draft resolution comes at a time of heightened tension in North-East Asia. The situation arising from the nuclear test by the Democratic People's Republic of Korea once again reaffirms Mongolia's nuclear-weapon-free status as an important initiative in confidence- and trust-building in a wider regional context and beyond. It has created a neutral zone that is transparent, stable and predictable. Mongolia's status is a good model for other countries in the subregion.

The contribution of Mongolia's nuclear-weapon-free status to strengthening regional stability was acknowledged by the Presidents of Mongolia and the People's Republic of China during President Enkhbayar's state visit to China last year. Furthermore, in May of this year, the President of the Republic of Korea expressed his support for Mongolia's endeavours to institutionalize its nuclear-weapon-free status at the international level, since it is an important measure for strengthening the non-proliferation regime and contributing to confidence-building measures in North-East Asia and beyond.

In his latest report on this matter, contained in document A/61/164, the Secretary-General concluded that the increased references to Mongolia's nuclear-weapon-free status at the bilateral, multilateral and international levels are evidence of growing international recognition. My delegation cannot but agree with that conclusion.

Indeed, our initiative has continued to be supported by the international community, as may be seen in such important political documents as the outcome document of the Fourteenth Conference of Heads of State or Government of Non-Aligned Countries, held in Havana in September of this year, and the Declaration adopted at the Conference of States parties to nuclear-weapon-free zones held in Mexico in April last year.

Allow me to draw attention to the draft report entitled "Information on the implementation of the law of Mongolia on its nuclear-weapon-free status and resolution of the State Great Hural", prepared by a governmental working group and annexed to document A/61/293. The working group comprised representatives from various ministries and Government agencies as well as representatives of civil society. One of the many findings in the report was that Mongolia's endeavours to implement article 4.2 of Mongolia's law on its nuclear-weapon-free status — which stipulates that "transportation through the territory of Mongolia of nuclear weapons, parts or components thereof, as well as of nuclear waste or any other nuclear material designed or produced for weapons purposes shall be prohibited" — and thereby to respond to the threat of illicit trafficking in weapons of mass destruction and related materials through maintaining appropriate effective border controls and law enforcement efforts had been hampered by a shortage of trained personnel and necessary equipment. The report therefore advised that assistance from the international community be sought in the following areas: provision of up-to-date, highly sensitive detection equipment, portable detection instruments and x-ray equipment to screen cargo; upgrading of the database on cross-border movements; training of customs and border patrol officers in areas such as export controls, biological security and the related standards; and prosecution of groups and individuals

engaged in terrorist activities involving weapons of mass destruction.

The draft resolution before the Committee in document A/C.1/61/L.53 has been updated to reflect the developments that have taken place since the adoption of resolution 59/73, while maintaining the main thrust of the previous resolutions under this agenda item. Like the texts adopted in previous years, it takes note of the report of the Secretary-General, expresses appreciation to the Secretary-General for the efforts to implement resolution 59/73, endorses and supports Mongolia's good-neighbourly relations with its neighbours and invites Member States to continue to cooperate with Mongolia on implementation of the provisions of the draft resolution.

The draft resolution has been subject to careful examination by interested delegations and enjoys wide support. My delegation therefore hopes that the Committee will agree, as with similar texts in the past, to adopt the draft resolution without a vote.

The Chairperson: I now give the floor to the representative of Pakistan to introduce draft resolution A/C.1/61/L.45.

Mr. Masood Khan (Pakistan): I am taking the floor to introduce the draft resolution contained in document A/C.1/61/L.45, entitled "Conclusion of effective international arrangements to assure non-nuclear-weapon States against the use or threat of use of nuclear weapons", on behalf of the delegations of Bangladesh, Brunei Darussalam, Colombia, Congo, Côte d'Ivoire, Cuba, Egypt, El Salvador, Guinea, Haiti, Indonesia, the Islamic Republic of Iran, Jordan, Kuwait, Lebanon, the Libyan Arab Jamahiriya, Malawi, Malaysia, Myanmar, the Philippines, Saudi Arabia, Sri Lanka, the Sudan, the Syrian Arab Republic, Viet Nam, Zambia and my own delegation.

The demand for security assurances was raised by the non-nuclear-weapon States in the 1960s, and it crystallized in 1968, during the concluding phase of the negotiations on the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT). The response of the nuclear-weapon States, reflected in Security Council resolution 255 (1968), was considered grossly inadequate by the non-nuclear-weapon States. At the first special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament, agreement was reached on the conclusion of an international instrument which would provide binding and credible negative security assurances to the non-nuclear-weapon States. However, the declarations made by the four — or five — nuclear-weapon States at the special session and later at the Review and Extension Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons, and as reflected in Security Council resolution 984 (1995), were also considered insufficient, qualified and partial by most of the non-nuclear-weapon States.

At the end of the cold war there was a general expectation that it would become easier for nuclear-weapon States to extend negative security assurances to the non-nuclear-weapon States. Unfortunately, the situation, instead of becoming easier, has become more complex. This has so far been the case for several reasons. This question is asked: Why should negative security assurances be given, and why should they be in the form of a legal instrument? There are several compelling reasons; let me mention a few.

The Charter obligates nations not to use or threaten to use force; that obligation extends to nuclear weapons. The right to self-defence, in that context, is not unrestricted; the application of international humanitarian law requires proportionality of response in armed conflicts, both conventional and strategic.

The positive and negative security assurances given so far are considered to be conditional and non-binding, amounting to political declarations. Moreover, most of the assurances would cease to be operative in case of an attack on those States or their allies carried out or sustained in alliance or in association with a nuclear-weapon State. Those conditions also apply to the States of nuclear-weapon-free zones; the zonal thus do not have cast-iron guarantees. Only one nuclear-weapon State has given unconditional negative security assurances to non-nuclear-weapon States and States of nuclear-weapon-free zones.

With the indefinite extension of the NPT, most nuclear-weapon States presume that they have the right to retain nuclear weapons, while complete nuclear disarmament under article VI of the NPT remains open-ended. The most recent NPT Review Conference and the September 2005 World Summit did not address the issues of disarmament, non-proliferation and negative security assurances. This is unfinished business; it has to be finished sooner or later.

Contrary to the letter and the spirit of Security Council resolutions 255 (1968) and 984 (1995), new security doctrines propound possible use of nuclear

weapons against the use or threat of use of chemical or biological weapons and against terrorism. Doctrines advocating "winnable" nuclear wars against non-nuclear-weapon States are not tenable. The Non-Aligned Movement has expressed concern over the development of new types of nuclear weapons and their possible deployment. New doctrines seem to favour the development of "mini-nukes" for actual battlefield use. Research on new tactical weapon designs would erode the confidence-building impact of negative security assurances. It would be a huge miscalculation to presume that the use of low-yield nuclear weapons would remain localized. Such use could lead to a wider nuclear escalation. The geographical scope of the use of nuclear weapons has increased with the expansion of nuclear alliances and with provisions for the sharing of nuclear weapons and command and control amongst alliance members. NATO retains the option of using nuclear weapons as part of its deterrence posture. That posture is not consistent with the pledges on negative security assurances made by its constituent nuclear-weapon States.

The possibility of asserting the right to use overwhelming force, understood to include nuclear weapons, and a nuclear response to non-nuclear weapons of mass destruction tend to weaken the fragile regime of negative security assurances — if indeed it can be characterized as a regime.

Finally, there are more declared, and one undeclared, nuclear-weapon States.

Under the circumstances, the conclusion of credible negative security assurances to the non-nuclear-weapon States has gained greater urgency. The sponsors of the draft resolution contained in document A/C.1/61/L.45 seek to underline and to operationalize that sense of urgency. The draft resolution is similar to those adopted by the Committee at previous sessions, with the required technical updating. It reaffirms the urgent need to reach an early agreement on effective international arrangements for negative security assurances. It notes with satisfaction that there is no objection, in principle, to the idea of an international convention on the subject. It appeals to all States, especially the nuclear-weapon States, to work towards an early agreement, and it recommends further intensification of efforts to evolve a common approach and a common formula on this issue. Finally, it recommends that the Conference on Disarmament actively continue intensive negotiations with a view to reaching early agreement on negative security assurances.

The sponsors believe that the conclusion of effective arrangements on negative security assurances could constitute a major confidence-building measure in the current tense international circumstances between nuclear and non-nuclear-weapon States, as well as amongst the nuclear-weapon States. Secondly, it could contribute to reducing the nuclear danger; it could ease the threats that arise from new doctrines of nuclear use and could facilitate the negotiations on other matters relating to nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation.

My delegation and the other sponsors therefore urge the adoption of the draft resolution contained in document A/C.1/61/L.45 by the widest possible majority.

The Chairperson: I call now on the representative of Mexico to introduce draft resolution A/C.1/61/L.13/Rev.1.

Mr. Juárez Cadenas (Mexico) (*spoke in Spanish*): My delegation is honoured to introduce, on behalf of the countries of the New Agenda Coalition — Brazil, Egypt, Ireland, New Zealand, South Africa, Sweden and my country, Mexico — the draft resolution entitled "Towards a nuclear-weapon-free world: accelerating the implementation of nuclear disarmament commitments", contained in document A/C.1/61/L.13/Rev.1.

The New Agenda Coalition is of the view that the very existence of nuclear weapons and the possibility of their use constitute a threat to international peace and security and to stability — which is already fragile throughout the world. The need to eliminate nuclear weapons is now more urgent than ever before, especially given current situation relating to the non-proliferation and disarmament machinery resulting from the actions of a number of countries.

For that reason, the Coalition is again submitting a draft resolution on this subject. We believe there is an urgent need for progress in this sphere. Technical updates have been made to the text as adopted in past years; we have also agreed on the inclusion of a new paragraph condemning all nuclear weapons tests by States parties and States non-parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons alike,

including the announced nuclear weapon test by the Democratic People's Republic of Korea. The Coalition is of the view that any nuclear test is to be deplored and undermines achievements made through decades of work.

The goal of nuclear disarmament is shared by the entire international community. For that reason, we appeal to all members for their support in the adoption of this draft resolution.

The Chairperson: We shall now proceed with our thematic debate on the subject of other disarmament measures and international security.

Mr. Mine (Japan): I should like to make remarks on two points. The first is the statement made yesterday by Under-Secretary-General Tanaka. Mr. Tanaka gave us an account of how Member countries are responding to resolutions adopted on the recommendation of the First Committee and in particular to the request from the Department for Disarmament Affairs (DDA) to Member countries for input so that the Secretary-General can report to the General Assembly. He pointed out that less than 10 per cent of Member countries have provided the Department with their responses. Truly, I was saddened and gravely disappointed by this. I myself referred to this problem last year, and a year later we are seeing such a poor result. This is a problem of the Member countries: I am not very familiar with the situation in DDA, but it is the responsibility of Member countries to respond to requests from the Department to submit national data, national statistics and other material.

I believe that this poor result — only 10 per cent compliance — means that Member countries are not interested. I do not say that this is true of all Member countries, but most are not interested in implementation, at least as far as reporting is concerned. I think that this is a serious matter: we cannot repeat the same problem over and over again. We have to think about what to do. Member countries should monitor the overall situation of reporting to DDA, not just their own reports. Such monitoring is absolutely necessary. I think that what Mr. Tanaka told us is not good enough, in the sense that it does not reflect a sense of responsibility on the part of Member countries.

I would like to propose to the Committee that we create an automatic mechanism — something like a decision that would "disappear" automatically if the response is very poor, perhaps less than 10 per cent. In that event, perhaps the following year we would lose, not the entire resolution, but the relevant paragraph. We might think about a general authorization so that, if such a situation arises again and is confirmed, the relevant paragraph would disappear.

My second point concerns education, which is related to every aspect of disarmament. In view of the time constraints, let me refer only to a few matters. I have good reason to bring up these points: we hope that Member countries, as encouraged in paragraph 33 of the recommendations of the United Nations study on disarmament and non-proliferation education (A/57/124), will include in their remarks to the First Committee information on the results of the implementation of the recommendations of that study. In a sense, this point is also related to what I said earlier.

I will touch briefly on the areas I wished to cover; a more extensive text is available to members.

The first is the United Nations Disarmament Fellowship Programme. I need not explain what it is; the Chairperson has mentioned it.

United Nations conferences on disarmament issues have been held in various places in Japan — and, I think, also in the Republic of Korea — for the past several years. This year, such a conference was held in Yokohama from 21 to 23 August.

We have prepared a white paper on disarmament; copies in English are available to members. I understand that many people are interested in the paper. Moreover, our Foreign Ministry has set up a new website on disarmament, aimed in particular at a young audience of primary, junior and high school students. Also, the Nagasaki International Film Festival is to focus on the issue of atomic bombs. I understand that the festival has received contributions from non-governmental organizations and representatives of civil society.

Finally, the Staff College of Japan's Self-defence Agency and our National Institute for Defence Studies have their own curriculum for disarmament and non-proliferation. That is also done in the context of education for audiences of various kinds.

Those are the items to which I wanted very briefly to refer. Those who are interested may find

further information in the paper available in this conference room.

The Chairperson: We will now proceed with the introduction of draft resolutions or decisions on other disarmament measures and international security.

I give the floor to the representative of the Russian Federation to introduce draft resolution A/C.1/61/L.35.

Mr. Vasiliev (Russian Federation) (*spoke in Russian*): The Russian Federation would like to introduce for the consideration of the First Committee the draft resolution entitled "Developments in the field of information and telecommunications in the context of international security", which is contained in document A/C.1/61/L.35.

The problem of ensuring international information security arose as a result of breakthroughs in information and communications technology leading to the emergence of wholly new security challenges and threats at the national, regional and international levels. Threats in the area of information are unique because, if information and communications technology is used for hostile purposes, we are not talking about the use of weaponry in the traditional sense. But the consequences of the hostile use of such technology could be of a scope comparable to the harm done by the use of conventional weapons, or even weapons of mass destruction.

The destructive use of international communications is characterized by universal accessibility, by they potential for random impact, for anonymity, for being disguised as peaceful activities and for far-reaching cross-border implementation, as well as by low cost and overall effectiveness. Information and communications technology can be used not only by individual criminals and criminal groups for their own purposes, but also by terrorists and extremist organizations and States with hostile political, military, economic and other goals.

Vulnerabilities in the area of information and the features of information and communications technology I have referred to make such technologies extremely attractive to those who want to have a negative impact on society and its interests, State security organizations and citizens. The global nature of today's threats, including threats to international information security, shows that we must undertake this effort collectively.

Therefore, as far back as 1998, Russia put forth for consideration by the General Assembly a draft resolution on international information security, which was adopted as resolution 53/70. In the course of these eight years, the General Assembly has adopted such resolutions annually. Today's draft resolution calls on the international community to carry out research into existing and potential threats in the sphere of information security and possible cooperative measures to address them, as well as concepts armed at strengthening the security of global information and telecommunication systems.

A great deal of useful work has already been done in this area. That includes the work done in 2004 and 2005 by the Group of Governmental Experts on Developments in the Field of Information and Telecommunications in the Context of International Security. However, due to the limited time available for the Group to do its work and the novel, sensitive and complex nature of the problems involved, that was only a first step in the consideration of the whole range of issues associated with information security.

In that connection, we consider that it is extremely important to continue the work begun. We are grateful to delegations for their support during the sixtieth session for the Russian draft resolution adopted as resolution 60/45, by which the Assembly decided to establish in 2009 a group of United Nations governmental experts to continue work on this subject.

The relevance and significance for the international community of problems associated with ensuring international information security can also be underscored by the fact that this is becoming a subject for active discussion in regional organizations. In that regard, heads of State or Government of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization have expressed their intention to develop close practical cooperation among their countries in this area. That was reflected in the adoption of a statement on international information security at the organization's summit meeting held on 15 June 2006.

We believe those are steps in the right direction. We must have a clear idea of the nature of the threats and challenges confronting humankind in connection with global computerization so that we can together and in a timely manner provide comprehensive and

mutually agreed approaches for the neutralization of those threats, with a view to strengthening international information security. The United Nations must be the basis for that work.

The new Russian draft resolution was drawn up with that goal in mind. With the exception of a few changes of a technical nature, the draft resolution is completely based on the text of last year's resolution, resolution 60/45. We previously distributed the text of draft resolution A/C.1/61/L.35 to capitals and to delegations in New York and Geneva. We would like to thank the delegations that have become sponsors of the draft resolution. We call for support of the Russian draft resolution and we hope that it will be adopted by consensus.

The Chairperson: I now give the floor to the representative of India to introduce draft resolution A/C.1/61/L.50.

Mr. Basu (India): On behalf of the sponsors, I have the honour to introduce the draft resolution entitled "Role of science and technology in the context of international security and disarmament", which is contained in document A/C.1/61/L.50. Continuing advances in information technology, advanced materials, life sciences and space applications since a draft resolution on this item was first put before the First Committee, in 1989, offer promising opportunities to all countries. Access to those technologies is particularly crucial for the social and economic development of developing countries. The sponsors recognize the dual-use character of many of the advances in science and technology. The potential of their use for both civilian and military applications is a legitimate cause of concern. However, discriminatory regimes deny access to those technologies to developing countries, even for peaceful development purposes.

The sponsors have consistently maintained that multilaterally negotiated and non-discriminatory agreements that are transparent and open to universal participation would be the best way to address proliferation concerns. The final document adopted last month at Havana by the Fourteenth Summit Conference of Heads of State or Government of the Non-Aligned Movement also reflected that approach. Even more than before, we need to develop an effective, inclusive and transparent system of export controls for technologies and materials that would achieve the objectives of non-proliferation in all its aspects while at the same time ensuring access to those technologies for peaceful applications. This draft resolution hopes to encourage and support such a process.

India, along with the other sponsors, hopes that draft resolution A/C.1/61/L.50 will receive the widest possible support.

The Chairperson: I now give the floor to the representative of Indonesia, will introduce draft resolutions A/C.1/61/L.6, A/C.1/61/L.7 and A/C.1/61/L.8.

Mr. Rachmianto (Indonesia): I have the honour to speak on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement (NAM) to introduce three draft resolutions on disarmament measures and international security. However, before doing that, allow me to read out a statement by the Coordinating Bureau of the Non-Aligned Movement on the nuclear test conducted by the Democratic People's Republic of Korea.

> "The Coordinating Bureau of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries expresses its concern while recognizing the complexities arising from the nuclear test in the Korean peninsula which underlined the need to work even harder to achieve the Movement's disarmament objectives, including elimination of nuclear weapons. The Movement calls upon the parties concerned in the region to exercise restraint, which contributes to regional security, to discontinue nuclear tests and not to transfer nuclear-weapons related materials, equipment and technology.
>
> "The Movement expresses its desire for the realization of the denuclearization of the Korean peninsula and continues to support the resumption of the six-party talks at the soonest possible time. The Movement strongly believes that diplomacy and dialogue through peaceful means must continue to find a long-term solution to the Korean nuclear issue.
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> "In the light of this action, the Movement reaffirms its principled positions on nuclear disarmament, which remains its highest priority, and on the related issue of nuclear non-proliferation in all its aspects, and stresses the importance that efforts aimed at non-proliferation should be parallel to simultaneous efforts aimed

at nuclear disarmament. It stresses its concern over the threat to humanity posed by the continued existence of nuclear weapons and of their possible use or threat of use. It reiterates deep concern over the slow pace of progress towards nuclear disarmament and the lack of progress by the nuclear-weapons States to accomplish the total elimination of their nuclear arsenals. It underscores the need for the nuclear-weapons States to implement the unequivocal undertaking that they [provided] in 2000 so as to accomplish the total elimination of nuclear weapons and emphasizes, in this regard, the urgent need to commence negotiations without delay.

"The Movement stresses its principles and priorities on disarmament and international security, as adopted at the XIV Summit Conference of Heads of State or Government of the Non-Aligned Movement held in Havana, from 11 to 16 September 2006."

Following the issuance of that statement on 13 October 2006, the Chairman of the Coordinating Bureau of the Non-Aligned Movement sent letters to the Presidents of the General Assembly and of the Security Council, requesting them to circulate the statement as an official document of the General Assembly and of the Security Council.

Allow me now to introduce two draft resolutions for the consideration of the Committee. Generally speaking, these draft resolutions have been drafted with some technical updating from previous resolutions under the same titles.

I turn first to the draft resolution contained in document A/C.1/61/L.6, entitled "Promotion of multilateralism in the area of disarmament and non-proliferation", under agenda item 90 (i). NAM believes strongly in multilateralism and multilaterally agreed solutions, in accordance with the Charter of the United Nations, as the only sustainable way of addressing disarmament and international security issues. NAM also believes that it is critical that the General Assembly adopt such resolutions to reflect our continued belief in the role of the United Nations in the area of disarmament and non-proliferation. NAM underscores that multilateralism is the core principle of negotiation in the area of disarmament and non-proliferation with a view to maintaining and strengthening universal norms and enlarging their scope.

Secondly, with regard to the draft resolution contained in document A/C.1/61/L.7, entitled "Observance of environmental norms in the drafting and implementation of agreements on disarmament and arms control", under agenda item 90 (j), NAM considers that the continued sustainability of the global environment is an issue of utmost importance, especially for succeeding generations. We should collectively endeavour to ensure that the necessary measures are taken to preserve and protect the environment, especially in the formulation and implementation of agreements concerning disarmament and arms control. We call upon all Member States to ensure the application of scientific and technological progress in the framework of international security, disarmament and other related fields, without detriment to the environment or to the effective contribution of such progress to attaining sustainable development.

Thirdly, with regard to draft resolution contained in document A/C.1/61/L.8, entitled "Relationship between disarmament and development", under agenda item 90 (k), NAM believes that the symbiotic relationship between disarmament and development and the important role of security in this context cannot be denied. NAM is concerned at the increasing global military expenditures, which could otherwise be spent on development, poverty eradication and the elimination of disease, particularly in developing countries. NAM reiterates the importance of exercising restraint in military expenditures so that human and financial resources thus saved can be used for the ongoing efforts to eradicate poverty and achieve the Millennium Development Goals. In this connection, NAM welcomes the report of the Group of Governmental Experts on the relationship between disarmament and development (see A/59/111) and its reappraisal of this significant issue in the current international context.

We hope that all delegations will be able to join us in extending their support to the draft resolutions that my delegation has just introduced.

Ms. Fernando (Sri Lanka): Earlier, the representative of Japan told the Committee about the information and education programmes supported by his country, particularly with respect to the disarmament fellowships that are much appreciated by

Member States and that certainly provide valuable awareness-building for young diplomats. He also made a proposal regarding the lack of response from Member States to the questionnaires sent out by the Department for Disarmament Affairs. In his proposal, he suggested that when the responses are less than 10 per cent the Department could dispense with such reporting.

The reporting burden is in fact a serious problem for Member States. I am aware that in many forums we are looking at ways and means to address this problem. Of course, one way is the simplification of reporting formats. I have a question for the Under-Secretary-General for Disarmament Affairs. Is he confident that all such means have been exhausted and that we have indeed come to the end of the road on this matter? Does he really feel that that is finally the way to go?

I would also point out that at the 17th meeting the Director of the United Nations Institute for Disarmament Research (UNIDIR) gave us an example of where reporting from Member States in fact increased following an awareness-building seminar that had been carried out by UNIDIR. On that occasion, it was the important subject of small arms and light weapons that was on the table. Similarly, it would seem to me that some of these reports could benefit from similar awareness-building. I wonder if the Under-Secretary-General could give us some views on this issue.

The Chairperson: I give the floor to Mr. Tanaka to respond.

Mr. Tanaka (Under-Secretary-General for Disarmament Affairs): In response to the query from the representative of Sri Lanka as to whether we have exhausted all means in addressing the reporting burden, let me say that, as a matter of fact, we in the Secretariat repeatedly sent out reminders about the filing of inputs to Member States that had no responded. Depending on the subject, we sent out a couple of reminders, and the result is what members have before them.

I do not know much about the experience of the United Nations Institute for Disarmament Research, but, as far as the Department for Disarmament Affairs is concerned, I do not think one conference or another would make any difference in the submission of inputs. It is over, and the results are before members.

Mr. Kim Kwang Il (Democratic People's Republic of Korea): With regard to draft resolution A/C.1/61/L.13/Rev.1, introduced by the representative of Mexico, on the nuclear test conducted by the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, my delegation draws the attention of the Committee to the following points.

As we have repeatedly stressed, the nuclear test conducted by the Democratic People's Republic of Korea in the exercise of its sovereignty is utterly attributable to the United States nuclear threat, sanctions and blockade against the Democratic People's Republic of Korea. Although my country conducted the nuclear test because of the United States, we remain unchanged in our view that the Korean peninsula should be denuclearized through dialogue and negotiations.

The Democratic People's Republic of Korea will feel no need to possess even a single nuke when it is no longer exposed to the United States threat, after that country has dropped its hostile policy towards the Democratic People's Republic of Korea and confidence has been built between the two countries.

If any delegations sincerely wish to resolve the nuclear issue on the Korean peninsula, they should include language in the draft resolution specifying that the abandonment of the nuclear threat and hostile policy of the United States against the Democratic People's Republic of Korea is a critical element in resolving the nuclear issue.

The delegation of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea categorically rejects all unjust and biased draft resolutions, which do not help at all in resolving the nuclear issue on the Korean peninsula.

The Chairperson: We shall now move on to our thematic discussion on regional disarmament and security. I shall now call on those delegations wishing to make statements on that subject.

Mr. Da Rocha Paranhos (Brazil) (*spoke in Spanish*): I am taking the floor on behalf of the States members of the Common Market of the South (MERCOSUR) — Argentina, Brazil, Paraguay, Uruguay and Venezuela — and the associated States Bolivia, Chile, Colombia, Ecuador and Peru.

MERCOSUR and its associated States believe that confidence-building measures are an important tool for achieving world peace and security,

complementing disarmament and non-proliferation efforts. The objective of confidence-building measures is to reduce uncertainties and misperceptions regarding the conduct of States, thus reducing the risk of military confrontation.

Because that is a dynamic concept, MERCOSUR and its associated States are convinced that its implementation and consolidation will not only make it possible to prevent conflicts, but will also provide an effective tool that will enable us, through greater transparency and cooperation in the field of defence and security, to promote greater political, economic and cultural integration. That belief was expressed in the Political Declaration of MERCOSUR, Bolivia and Chile as a Zone of Peace, signed in 1998 at Ushuaia. In addition to declaring the subregion free of nuclear weapons, that instrument calls for, inter alia, the strengthening and progressive coordination of consultation and cooperation mechanisms on security and defence issues among member States.

We have made progress by identifying and implementing confidence- and security-building measures in most of the areas identified in the 1995 Declaration of Santiago and the 1998 Declaration of San Salvador, by adopting the illustrative list of confidence- and security-building measures adopted at the meeting of governmental experts held in Miami in February 2003, and by adopting the Declaration on Security in the Americas as the outcome of the Special Conference on Security, held in Mexico City in October 2003.

In the belief that the exchange of information promotes the strengthening of confidence-building measures at the hemispheric level, we established the Organization of American States Information System in April 2005, at the first meeting of the Forum on Confidence- and Security-Building Measures, which has become a relevant mechanism for strengthening confidence-building measures.

With regard to agreements, the countries of MERCOSUR and its associated States are parties to the Inter-American Convention on Transparency in Conventional Weapons Acquisitions and the Inter-American Convention against the Illicit Manufacturing of and Trafficking in Firearms, Ammunition, Explosives and Other Related Materials. Furthermore, last year, thanks to the efforts of the MERCOSUR Working Group on Firearms, MERCOSUR countries and associated States adopted a memorandum of understanding to promote the exchange of information on the illicit manufacture of and trafficking in firearms in order to facilitate not only the tracing of firearms, but also the implementation of concrete measures in the policies carried out by the countries of the region.

MERCOSUR and its associated States are voluntarily building on bilateral and subregional experience related to the adoption of standardized methodologies for the assessment of military expenditures, the publication and exchange of white papers on defence and the organization of, inter alia, joint activities related to mine action and military exercises, border committee meetings and early warning actions to prevent natural disasters.

In parallel, we highlight the holding of high-level meetings of ministers for foreign affairs and defence and meetings to negotiate and coordinate common bilateral and subregional positions in order to establish frank and direct dialogue to jointly assess aspects of defence and security and to exchange ideas and points of view regarding national defence policy objectives and joint measures to address problems in that regard.

At the multilateral level, MERCOSUR and its associated States have demonstrated a high degree of compliance by submitting information to the United Nations Register of Conventional Arms and to the United Nations System for the Standardized Reporting of Military Expenditures. However, we, the countries of the region, believe that confidence-building measures are a dynamic concept that can be further strengthened in practice through full respect for the norms and principles of international law, including the Charter of the United Nations.

During the sixtieth session of the General Assembly, we Member States adopted resolution 60/82. Among its objectives is the strengthening of the exchange of information on confidence-building measures in the area of conventional weapons. Informal meetings have been held to provide for such an exchange of experiences. It will be necessary to fine-tune that mechanism by establishing a computerized database, which will make it possible to facilitate regular consultations on the progress made in the design and implementation of measures at the global level. We hope that database will be established in the coming months, so that we may have at our

disposal mechanisms that complement those already in existence at the United Nations.

Mr. Ismayil-Zada (Azerbaijan): Regional disarmament and security play a vital role in establishing peace in all conflict zones. Unfortunately, there are still many unresolved conflicts in the world, especially in our region, and they have become concentration points of uncontrolled arms. One such point is the Nagorny Karabakh region of Azerbaijan and the territories around it that are still under Armenian occupation. That area constitutes almost 20 per cent of our territory. That region has become a key transit point for the illegal trade in arms, which has taken on threatening proportions for the security of my country.

During the past five years, Armenia has been intensively arming its military forces in the Nagorny Karabakh region of Azerbaijan. Data analysis indicates that during that time the amount of unaccounted-for and uncontrolled treaty-limited equipment in the occupied territories has increased consistently. As a result of that fact, according to the data provided through the Protocol on Notification and Exchange of Information to the Treaty on Conventional Armed Forces in Europe, in 2005 Armenia had 316 battle tank units, 324 armoured combat vehicle units, 322 artillery units and 50,000 personnel. Those figures exceed the acceptable rates for Armenia.

In the light of that situation, Azerbaijan is obliged to take necessary measures as regards the existence of the unresolved conflict on its territory and the above-mentioned increases in the occupied territories during the past 15 years.

With regard to the increase in Azerbaijan's military budget, as we have stated previously, that is related to the overall economic development of the country and to a general increase in the State budget. In terms of quantitative indicators, we are not exceeding the usual levels of expenditure in peacetime, despite the fact of occupation and undeclared war. It should be taken into account that a considerable part of our expenditures go to the salaries, housing and other social needs of military personnel. Moreover, comparative analysis shows that in correlation to its population, Armenia is much more militarized in terms of the number of military personnel and the quantity of armaments. Armenia's military budget as a percentage of its gross domestic product consists of 3.86 per cent, while Azerbaijan's is 3.26 per cent.

Armenia's Ministry of Defence has repeatedly stated that

> "Armenia is not concerned about the increase in the military budget of Azerbaijan, because the military budget of Armenia is in no way lagging behind Azerbaijan's military budget. Armenia's military budget is not only financed by the Government, but also by the Armenian diaspora. Our military budget has other donors, but we do not talk about it and there is no need for that."

As long as Armenia continues to follow its aggressive policy, any talks about peace, stability and all-inclusive cooperation in the region are irrelevant. First of all, Armenia should ask itself about the reasons for this situation. Not surprisingly, Armenia is again ma king another unsuccessful attempt to mislead the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe.

Perhaps it would be better to mention the situation in 2001, when Armenia, having circulated a new report on transfers under the United Nations Register of Conventional Arms, did not notify the Register about eight additional tanks it had acquired. The explanation given by Armenia at the time was that those eight battle tanks were recovered from various parts retrieved from the scene of border clashes. That made the situation even more contradictory. It was only after Azerbaijan's statement on this issue that Armenia was obliged to provide information in the framework of the Joint Consultative Group. Armenia was also obliged to provide information about the purchase of 10 Su-25 combat aircraft, after Azerbaijan raised the issue in 2005.

Azerbaijan is today in a state of war. Despite that fact, it is continuing to fulfil its commitments under the Treaty on Conventional Armed Forces in Europe. Given the undeclared war by Armenia, Azerbaijan continues to have every reason to halt its implementation of the Treaty on its territory. However, we continue to refuse to take that step. Moreover, even in this difficult situation, we are doing our best to implement all the commitments flowing from the Treaty.

Ms. Ibrahim (Iraq) (*spoke in Arabic*): With regard to the agenda item on weapons of mass destruction, especially nuclear weapons, which pose

the greatest threat to the peoples of the world by virtue of their devastating destructive capacity, we must continue to bear in mind the destruction that those weapons can produce and the devastation they can cause to cities, mankind and the environment.

Iraq was subjected to extensive damage and destruction under the previous regime and its policies. The new Iraq would like to reiterate its respect for and commitment to the international treaties on weapons of mass destruction. In affirmation of that, paragraph (e) of article 9 of Iraq's Constitution — which 79 per cent of the population supports — states that

> "The Iraqi Government shall respect and implement Iraq's international commitments regarding the non-proliferation, non-development, non-production, and non-use of nuclear, chemical, and biological weapons. Associated equipment, material, technologies, and communications systems for use in the development, manufacture, production, and use of such weapons shall be banned."

The Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) guarantees the right of States and peoples to invest in nuclear energy for peaceful purposes. However, given the existing double standards, the use of nuclear energy must remain a priority. States have in the past claimed that their nuclear energy programmes were peaceful in purpose, but some of those programmes were quickly diverted to nuclear arms manufacturing. Therein lies the risk.

The NPT system will not be successful if other countries are denied the right to develop nuclear energy. We must therefore find a balance between the need to ensure non-proliferation and the possibility of developing nuclear energy for peaceful purposes. Countries must have the right to develop nuclear energy for peaceful uses. At the same time, however, we must have measures in place to ensure that such programmes are not diverted for the purpose of manufacturing nuclear weapons. Thus there is a need for international treaties to be respected and for cooperation with the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) and its safeguards regime.

We believe that the Middle East should become a nuclear-weapon-free zone. In that regard, we are cooperating with the United Nations, the League of Arab States and the IAEA to ensure adherence to international treaties and conventions and implementation of such a policy. We urge all countries without discrimination to adhere to non-proliferation instruments, in particular the NPT.

In addition, we call for the implementation of the IAEA's international safeguards regime in the Middle East. In that regard, we emphasize the need to compel Israel to adhere to the NPT and to place all its nuclear installations under international controls and supervision.

Our position is based on article VII of the NPT, paragraph 14 of Security Council resolution 687 (1991), the Final Document of the 1995 NPT Review and Extension Conference, and General Assembly resolutions on the subject. Our position enjoys international and regional support. We must now find the appropriate mechanisms to ensure the proper implementation of these policies.

Mr. Sougouri (Burkina Faso) (*spoke in French*): My delegation would like to thank you, Madam Chairperson, for giving us the opportunity to follow with great interest the statements made with regard to regional disarmament. Those interventions have enriched both our debate and the deliberations of the First Committee.

The state of the Regional Centre for Peace and Disarmament in Africa has drawn our attention in particular. As the Permanent Representative of Burkina Faso rightly recalled during his statement at the 5th meeting, during the Committee's general debate on 5 October 2006, the Lomé Centre is of particular importance to the continent — a continent that has been shaken by tension and all sorts of crises, both full-blown and emerging, and where the illegal circulation of small arms and light weapons has become a veritable scourge that has disastrous consequences for development. The threats facing the continent being dealt with by the Centre are so great that various steps must be taken to strengthen the legal and institutional disarmament framework.

In West Africa, for example, the Centre will no doubt be called upon to support the implementation of the Convention on Small Arms and Light Weapons, Their Ammunition, and Other Related Materials, which was adopted by the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) to replace the Bamako Moratorium on the Importation, Exportation and Manufacture of Small Arms and Light Weapons in West Africa. The Centre will also have a role to play in

conjunction with the group on light weapons established in June 2006 by ECOWAS to follow-up the implementation of its Small Arms Control Programme.

Burkina Faso would therefore like to express its grave concern at the difficulties confronting the Centre. In that regard, we would like to commend the important work done by the consultative mechanism since its establishment. We also hope that it will soon be able to complete its work, so as to breathe new life into the Centre.

My delegation believes that there is no doubt that we need a candid analysis of the situation of this tool for the promotion of peace and the culture of peace. However, that should be done with all the requisite flexibility and while taking into account the specific needs of the region. We hope that sufficient resources will be provided to the Centre, regardless of the mandate it is given. In other words, even with a revised and corrected mandate, the Centre will need adequate human, financial and material resources — resources that are, above all, predictable — to ensure that it can adequately carry out its mandate.

In the light of the report of the Secretary-General in document A/61/137, it is no exaggeration to say that the Lomé Centre is at a crossroads. The report indicates that, although the Centre has reduced both its activities and personnel, "the future of the Centre looks bleak, as there is no foreseeable reliable source of funding that would ensure its operational sustainability." (*A/61/137, para. 40*)

That diagnosis, which could not be more clear or alarming, requires urgent and collective redress. It must be collective action because, after all, this is a United Nations Centre.

Mr. Al-Ma'Adheed (Qatar) (*spoke in Arabic*): The representative of Qatar, in his statement during the First Committee's general debate regarding the agenda items relating to the establishment of nuclear-weapon-free zones, referred to possible zones that could serve as examples to other regions of the world with regard to the implementation of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT). For four decades now, that Treaty has been one of the major instruments for ensuring the maintenance of international peace and security.

In supporting the NPT, the First Committee annually adopts by consensus a draft resolution entitled "Establishment of a nuclear-weapon-free zone in the region of the Middle East", in order to rid the region of the threats posed by nuclear weapons. The Committee also annually adopts, by an overwhelming majority, a draft resolution entitled "The risk of nuclear proliferation in the Middle East". That draft resolution calls upon Israel, as the only State in the region not party to the NPT, to adhere, inter alia, to the Treaty without delay and to place all its nuclear facilities under the safeguards regime of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), so as to achieve the universality of the NPT and as an important confidence-building step among the States of the region aimed at strengthening peace and security.

International multilateralism seems to have lost its momentum and appears to be receding. Instead of taking decisions, we are incapable of implementing the resolutions we adopt, especially those relating to nuclear disarmament. In other words, there is clear selectivity as regards what the great Powers want and do not want to implement.

My delegation believes there should be a working mechanism for the implementation of disarmament draft resolutions originating in the First Committee and adopted by the General Assembly. Both the Security Council and the international community should adopt a comprehensive approach to prevent the proliferation of all weapons of mass destruction in every State of the Middle East without exception.

The existence of two standards when it comes to nuclear disarmament and weapons of mass destruction is only a prelude to chaos and instability. The State of Qatar therefore calls upon all Member States to implement resolutions relating to the establishment of a zone free of weapons of mass destruction in the Middle East, so as to ensure security, stability, benefit and well-being for all the peoples of the region. We shall continue to make that appeal in all international forums, for we firmly believe that there is a need to make the Middle East, including Arabian Gulf countries, a zone free of weapons of mass destruction.

We believe that the possession of such destructive weapons by any State in the region would be a threat to the region and a source of great concern for all its peoples and the entire world. We urge all influential States to discharge their legal obligations and demonstrate their credibility and good faith vis-à-vis

the Middle East by making it a region free of weapons of mass destruction.

Selectivity is not an option focusing all attention on a single country while others are completely ignored encourages the proliferation of nuclear weapons. We therefore urge all States concerned to work seriously towards the implementation of General Assembly resolutions aimed at making the Middle East a region free of weapons of mass destruction, as well as the relevant resolutions regarding the danger of nuclear proliferation in the Middle East.

Mr. Al-Shamsi (United Arab Emirates) (*spoke in Arabic*): The Middle East and the Arabian Gulf regions are now among the tensest in the world. That is due not only to recurring wars and the ongoing Israeli occupation of Palestinian and other Arab territories, but also to Israel's possession of an advanced arsenal of weapons of mass destruction, in particular nuclear weapons and their means of delivery. It is also due to attempts by States of the region to build nuclear reactors outside the safeguards regime of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA). We consider that to be a great source of danger and concern, both for the security and stability of neighbouring countries and peoples and for the entire region and the world as a whole.

The United Arab Emirates, which strongly condemns Israel's continued unilateral policy as regards the development and possession of nuclear weapons, would therefore like to reiterate its appeal to the international community to take all the necessary steps to pressure the Israeli Government to implement without delay the requirements stipulated in the relevant Security Council and General Assembly resolutions and the decisions adopted by the Conferences of States Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) calling for Israel to accede to the NPT, as all other States of the region have done. Israel should also place its entire nuclear arsenal and all its nuclear and fissile materials under the safeguards regime of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), in accordance with the resolution on the Middle East adopted at the 2000 NPT Review Conference and with the aim of strengthening the universality of the Treaty. In that connection, we would like to stress the following points.

First, Israel must cooperate with the IAEA by declaring all of its nuclear facilities and activities and accepting verification under the Agency's safeguards regime. Secondly, Israel should be called upon to immediately stop its production and stockpiling of all fissile and other materials and equipment that can be used in the production of weapons of mass destruction. It should also immediately cease all nuclear testing and dismantle all its existing nuclear arsenals. Thirdly, all States, in particular nuclear-weapon States, should abide by the obligations set out in the relevant international resolutions that call for halting all technical, financial and scientific support that could lead to the upgrading of weapons of mass destruction by Israel.

Current international circumstances require serious and strenuous efforts aimed at the establishment in the Middle East of a zone free from all weapons of mass destruction, especially nuclear weapons. If that is achieved, it would greatly contribute to easing security tensions and instability in the region. It would also pave the way for the promotion of dialogue and the return to the process of peace negotiations among the parties concerned, with a view to arriving at a comprehensive, just and lasting settlement of the issue of Palestine and the Middle East. That would enhance peace and stability for all our peoples and countries.

In conclusion, we hope that delegations to the First Committee will support draft resolution A/C.1/61/L.1, on the establishment of a nuclear-weapon-free zone in the Middle East and draft resolution A/C.1/61/L.2, on the risk of nuclear proliferation in the Middle East, especially given that they both reflect the disturbing reality in the Middle East. They are also in line with international efforts aimed at achieving comprehensive nuclear disarmament in order to spare our peoples and humankind as a whole from the destructive scourge of war.

Mr. Al Oqaab (Kuwait) (*spoke in Arabic*): The Middle East region continues to face security threats and dangers emanating from the proliferation and use of weapons of mass destruction, including nuclear weapons, which are a source of great concern for the region that must not be ignored.

That situation prompted the States of the region to emphasize the importance of making the Middle East region a zone free from nuclear weapons and weapons of mass destruction. The lack of progress in

that regard is due primarily to Israel's refusal to accede to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) and to place all its nuclear facilities under the safeguards regime of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA).

Given that Israel is the only State in the Middle East to possess nuclear weapons, as well as the only such State not to have acceded to the NPT, my delegation demands that Israel immediately accede to the NPT, refrain from developing, producing, testing or acquiring nuclear weapons and abandon its pursuit of such weapons, in accordance with the relevant resolutions of the General Assembly. We also call on Israel to place all its nuclear facilities under full-scope IAEA safeguards, as that would build confidence among all the countries of the region and would be a step towards the promotion of peace and security in the region.

My delegation calls upon the international community to make efforts to end sales to Israel of scientific and technological tools and means that contribute to enhancing its nuclear weapons, as well as to any other State seeking to develop its programmes to produce weapons of mass destruction. Those steps are crucial to the establishment of a zone in the Middle East free of all weapons of mass destruction, which is an important element in promoting regional stability, in strengthening international peace and security and in bolstering the international NPT regime.

Mr. Benítez Versón (Cuba) (*spoke in Spanish*): Regional and international disarmament and non-proliferation strategies complement one another, and should therefore be implemented simultaneously. That approach was agreed upon by consensus by all States Members of the United Nations — although often it is not carried out. The United Nations has a key role to play in ensuring complementarity between regional and international disarmament processes.

We acknowledge the positive steps that have been taken to that end by the Department for Disarmament Affairs, and especially by the Regional Disarmament Branch. However, much remains to be done. To be effective, any regional disarmament or non-proliferation strategy must take into account the region's specific characteristics and conditions. The goal must be to strengthen regional security and stability at the lowest possible level of armament and armed forces while not diminishing security for any participating States.

We believe that regional disarmament strategies must place priority on eliminating the military capabilities and imbalances that lead to greater instability. That should include eliminating the capacity to launch large-scale offensive operations and surprise attacks.

The United Nations regional centres for peace and disarmament can contribute considerably to cooperation and understanding among the States of each region. That is why Cuba firmly supports draft resolution A/C.1/61/L.9, on the regional centres, submitted to the Committee by the Non-Aligned Movement. Cuba is also a sponsor of draft resolution A/C.1/61/L.14, on the United Nations Regional Centre for Peace, Disarmament and Development in Latin America and the Caribbean.

It is essential that we continue to provide all the necessary support to the regional centres. We note that a number of donors of funds to the Centre in Latin America specify that those funds are to be used for specific projects of interest to them, which do not necessarily correspond to the disarmament priorities agreed by the United Nations. We emphasize that the limited resources available to the regional centres should be devoted to projects that take due account of agreed United Nations disarmament priorities, nuclear disarmament chief among them.

Ms. Tufail (Pakistan): I am taking the floor to address the theme of regional disarmament.

We thank Mr. Nobuaki Tanaka, Under-Secretary-General for Disarmament Affairs, and all the other presenters, who have given us a comprehensive picture of the efforts being made at the regional and subregional levels to reinforce the synergy between the United Nations and regional organizations and entities. It was evident from their presentations that regional and subregional organizations make important contributions to peace and stability around the world. These organizations support and supplement the work of the United Nations.

Disarmament and conventional balance can be pursued in a very effective manner if global approaches are underpinned by sustained regional initiatives. Both should move in tandem. In that regard, three elements are important: confidence-building measures, conflict

resolution and credible measures towards regional disarmament.

The predominant concerns about nuclear weapons tend to blur the focus on the threat posed by the massive acquisition of advanced and sophisticated conventional weapons. Regions play a significant role in limiting conventional weapons and armed forces. The Treaty on Conventional Armed Forces in Europe — or the CFE Treaty, as it is called — has made tangible progress in reducing conventional arms and elaborating confidence-building measures. Several such measures have been initiated by the Regional Forum of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations and, recently, by the Shanghai Cooperation Organization. Similarly, the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe and the African Union are making singular contributions.

Nuclear-weapon-free zones have contributed to nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation. There is overwhelming support for the establishment of a nuclear-weapon-free zone in the Middle East.

Broader efforts to bring about peace and security should be anchored in peacemaking, peacekeeping, equitable economic and trade practices, the protection of civilians in conflict, dialogue among civilizations and disarmament. The approach to disarmament should not be fragmented. Increasingly, regional organizations are promoting these objectives. In particular, they are becoming involved in supporting peacekeeping operations.

We believe that efforts by countries to promote regional disarmament that take into account the specific characteristics of each region, in accordance with the principle of undiminished security at the lowest level of armament, would enhance the stability of all States. It is therefore highly advisable that States, wherever possible, conclude agreements on disarmament, non-proliferation and should confidence-building measures at the regional and subregional levels.

The Chairperson: I call again on the delegation of Pakistan, to introduce draft resolutions A/C.1/61/L.42 and A/C.1/61/L.43.

Mr. Khalilullah (Pakistan): I would like to introduce draft resolution A/C.1/61/L.42, entitled "Confidence-building measures in the regional and subregional context". Bangladesh, Colombia, Kuwait, Malaysia, Ukraine and Pakistan are the sponsors of the draft resolution.

While the United Nations Charter designates the maintenance of peace and security at the global level as the primary responsibility of the international community, in practice, tensions at the regional and subregional levels constitute the main source of instability. Such tensions contribute to the arms race, not only endangering international peace and security, but also undermining efforts aimed at arms control and disarmament. Consequently, a spiralling arms race, particularly in regions of tension and conflict, obstructs the peaceful settlement of disputes, rendering their resolution even more difficult; it widens poverty and spreads despair and anger.

Another reason that my delegation submitted this draft resolution is the availability of an overwhelming body of evidence clearly establishing that the initiation of confidence-building measures in tension-ridden regions has paid tangible dividends for peace. By lowering tension through confidence-building measures and peaceful dispute settlement, States can devote their resources and energies to the social and economic advancement of their peoples. Such an approach could also supplement arms control and disarmament efforts, since most threats to peace and security in the post-cold-war era arise mainly among States located in the same region or subregion.

The regional arms race is the bane of development. The acquisition of military arsenals beyond legitimate security requirements is the prime cause of economic debility in several parts of the world. There exists a symbiotic link between conflict and underdevelopment, between war and poverty. That insidious relationship must be broken in order to put an end to the suffering of vast segments of mankind.

The regional arms race must be stopped through the achievement of security at the lowest level of armament. Accordingly, a combination of political and military confidence-building measures could help in strengthening peace and security and also encourage regions of tension to take measures aimed at disarmament and arms control.

The draft resolution is representative of the aspirations of a wide body of the international community. It highlights several aspects of confidence-building measures. First, confidence-building measures should be adopted by States locked in territorial or

other disputes in order to prevent armed conflict through bilateral, subregional or regional dialogue. Secondly, renunciation of the use or threat of use of force and reaffirmation of the Charter principles listed under Chapter VI may facilitate the pacific settlement of disputes among States. Thirdly, confidence-building measures should be developed that encourage the maintenance of military balance among the States of a region in the acquisition, development and deployment of various weapon systems. Finally, confidence-building measures should be elaborated to strengthen peace along borders so as to avoid conflict and to prevent the unintended or accidental outbreak of hostilities, particularly in nuclearized theatres.

The preambular part of the draft resolution reiterates the basic purposes and principles of the United Nations Charter and recalls General Assembly and Disarmament Commission decisions relating to the prevention of armed conflict. It recognizes the need for peaceful dialogue in regions of tension in order to avert conflict, and it welcomes the peace processes already initiated in various regions to resolve disputes through peaceful means bilaterally or through mediation by third parties. It also recognizes that regions that have already developed confidence-building measures at bilateral, subregional and regional levels in the political and military fields, including arms control and disarmament, have greatly improved the climate of peace and security in their regions and have contributed to the improvement of the socio-economic conditions of their people.

In the operative paragraphs, the draft resolution call upon Member States to refrain from the use or threat of use of force, to reaffirm commitment to the peaceful settlement of disputes under Chapter VI of the Charter, and to open consultations and dialogue in regions of tension and conflict, without preconditions. It urges strict compliance with bilateral, regional and international arms control and disarmaments agreements to which the contending States are party.

The resolution also urges the maintenance of military balance in regions of tension in the acquisition of weapons systems and encourages the promotion bilateral and regional confidence-building measures to avoid conflict and prevent the unintended and accidental outbreak of hostilities. It also requests the Secretary-General to consult the regional States and ascertain their views with a view to promoting confidence-building measures in the regions of tension.

My delegation believes that the resolution serves as a platform for all regions of tension and conflict by encouraging States to address their disputes in a peaceful manner and to avert the spectre of war and destruction. Therefore my delegation and the other sponsors hope that draft resolution A/C.1/61/L.42 will be adopted with the full consent of this Committee.

I now wish to introduce draft resolution A/C.1/61/L.43, entitled "Conventional arms control at the regional and subregional levels", on behalf of the delegations of Bangladesh, Belarus, Egypt, Germany, Liberia, Malaysia, Nepal, Peru, Spain, Syrian Arab Republic, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Ukraine and my own delegation.

This draft resolution aims to promote disarmament endeavours in the area of conventional disarmament at the regional and subregional levels. Though its importance is evident, this issue has not received the attention and support it deserves. We need a sharp focus on conventional balance in arms control.

In its preamble, draft resolution L.43 outlines several principles and precepts, including the crucial role of arms control in peace and security, the threats to peace in the post-cold-war era arising mainly among States in the same region or subregion, preservation of a balance in the defence capabilities of States at the lowest level of armaments as a contribution to peace and stability, promotion of agreements to strengthen peace and security at the lowest possible level of armaments and military forces, a special responsibility of the militarily significant States and States with larger military capabilities in promoting agreements for regional peace and security, and the objective of preventing the possibility of military attack launched by surprise and of avoiding aggression.

The preamble also notes with particular interest the initiatives taken in various regions, including in a number of Latin American countries, and the proposals for conventional arms control in South Asia. It recognizes the relevance and value of the Treaty on Conventional Armed Forces in Europe, which is described as a cornerstone of European security.

In its operative part, draft resolution A/C.1/61/L.43 decides to give urgent consideration to the issues involved in conventional disarmament at the regional and subregional levels and requests the Conference on Disarmament to consider formulating principles that could serve as a framework for regional

agreements. It also requests the Secretary-General to seek the views of Member States and to submit a report to the General Assembly at its sixty-second session.

The sponsors look forward to the Committee's strong support for these draft resolutions, which reflect the core concerns and interests of the international community in the field of disarmament and arms control. There is an abiding interest in the recommendations contained in the resolutions and in their follow-up and faithful implementation. These draft resolutions also represent the considered views of several States and multiple constituents.

The Chairperson: There seem to be no more delegations wishing to make statements on the subject of regional disarmament. Let us then continue with the introduction of draft resolutions pertaining to regional disarmament and security.

Mr. El Hadj Ali (Algeria) (*spoke in French*): It is an honour and a pleasure for the Algerian delegation to once again introduce to the First Committee the draft resolution entitled "Strengthening of security and cooperation in the Mediterranean region", A/C.1/61/L.34, on behalf of 36 delegations of Euro-Mediterranean countries and Member States.

Through the sustained and regular introduction of this draft resolution, the sponsors demonstrate their unswerving desire to make the Mediterranean space an area of peace and stability. They reiterate their determination to take an active part in the preservation of peace and security internationally, just as they are expressing their determination to promote cooperation and solidarity in an area where throughout history the virtues of exchange between people have been shown.

The shared future of the people of the Mediterranean region has made dialogue necessary and appropriate, dialogue that has become more in depth in recent years because of the multiplication of frameworks for cooperation between the two sides of the Sea. That is the case, for example, in the Mediterranean Forum, the 5 + 5 talks and the Conference of Interior Ministers of the Western Mediterranean. Such initiatives show the growing awareness of the close link between security in Europe and security and stability in the Mediterranean. Since the Barcelona Conference — the tenth anniversary of which was marked last November — the countries of the European Union and those of the southern side of the Mediterranean have committed to a process of dialogue and partnership through the intensification of common efforts to promote and consolidate peace and security in the region and to lay the foundations for various types of cooperation.

Draft resolution A/C.1/61/L.34 takes up the contents of the resolution adopted at the previous session (resolution 60/94) and attempts to cover a broad range of topics linked to strengthening peace and cooperation in the Mediterranean region. It emphasizes the indivisible character of security in the Mediterranean and recalls the initiatives taken by Mediterranean countries to consolidate peace and security and cooperation. It reaffirms the duty of all States to help with the stability and prosperity of the Mediterranean region and their commitment to respect the principles of the United Nations Charter and the provisions of the Declaration on Principles of International Law pertaining to Friendly Relations and Cooperation among States.

The draft resolution also underscores the basic principles pursuant to which the efforts are being made by Mediterranean countries to eliminate all causes of tension in the region and to solve the problems prevailing there in a peaceful, just and lasting manner. It calls for the elimination of economic and social disparities and for the promotion of mutual respect and better understanding among the peoples and cultures of the Euro-Mediterranean region with a view to enhancing peace, security and cooperation. The text calls upon States of the region which have not yet done so to adhere to all multilaterally negotiated legal instruments related to the field of disarmament and nuclear non-proliferation and encourages all States to favour the establishment of confidence-building measures and to promote openness and transparency.

Through this draft resolution, the States of the region are also encouraged to strengthen further their cooperation in combating terrorism in all of its forms and manifestations, taking into account the relevant resolutions of the United Nations, and in combating organized crime, illicit arms transfers and illicit drug production and trafficking in drugs, which pose a threat to peace and stability.

This year, we have thought it timely to introduce a new preambular paragraph in order to highlight the first Euro-Mediterranean Summit which took place on 27 and 28 November 2005 in Barcelona. That event reiterated the historically special nature of European-

Mediterranean relations and emphasized the enormous reservoir of complementarity that should be further developed in the reciprocal interest of the States and peoples of the region.

We also wanted to emphasize, in the same paragraph, the Summit's adoption of the Euro-Mediterranean Code of Conduct on Countering Terrorism which, as we see it, is an additional milestone in the activity of the international community to establish a comprehensive unified multilateral cooperative framework to fight this transnational scourge.

Similarly, we also wanted to supplement operative paragraph 7 by including wording on combating the acquisition by terrorist groups of arms of mass destruction to bring it into line with other relevant texts adopted within the framework of the United Nations.

As with similar texts in previous sessions, the sponsors are confident that draft resolution A/C.1/61/L.34 will enjoy the support of all members of the Committee and that it will be adopted without a vote.

The Chairperson: Before giving the floor to the next speaker, I call on the Secretary for a brief announcement.

Mr. Sareva (Secretary of the Committee): Members of the Committee should by now have before them informal paper no. 1, which is a tool to guide the Committee in its work during the action part of the session next week. The informal paper lists all those draft resolutions that will be ready for action on Monday. Towards the end of today's meeting, the Chairperson will read out some basic parameters concerning our work during the action part. Members will also get a fact sheet with ground rules for taking action.

I would like to inform members that oral statements will be made on Monday in connection with draft resolutions A/C.1/61/L.9, A/C.1/61/L.14, A/C.1/61/L.18, A/C.1/61/L.27, A/C.1/61/L.33 and A/C.1/61/L.35. In accordance with the practice adopted last year, the texts of all those oral statements will be available today in room S-2977.

The Chairperson: I now give the floor to the representative of Rwanda to introduce draft resolution A/C.1/61/L.33.

Mr. Nsengimana (Rwanda) (*spoke in French*): In my capacity as the current Chairman of the United Nations Standing Advisory Committee on Security Questions in Central Africa, I have the honour to introduce the draft resolution contained in document A/C.1/61/L.33, entitled "Regional confidence-building measures: activities of the United Nations Standing Advisory Committee on Security Questions in Central Africa", on behalf of the sponsors, namely, Angola, Burundi, Cameroon, the Central African Republic, Chad, the Congo, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Gabon, Equatorial Guinea, Sao Tome and Principe and Rwanda.

For more than 15 years, the Central African subregion has faced harsh conflicts that have caused heavy losses of human life, massive uprooting of populations, refugee flows and endemic insecurity, as well as other harmful consequences for regional development.

Member States have recognized the urgent need for the Central African States to take measures that could reduce tension and misunderstanding among them. The draft resolution contained in document A/C.1/61/L.33 recognizes the importance and effectiveness of these confidence-building measures which comprehensively contribute to regional stability and to international peace and security. The draft resolution aims to promote confidence-building measures at the regional and subregional levels in order to reduce tension and conflict and thus to promote peace, security and development.

The impact of such confidence-building measures is very significant. The draft resolution notes with satisfaction that States of the subregion are making efforts to strengthen their bilateral relations. That has led to considerable improvements in the area of security as well as to a return to normality and to economic activity in areas previously ravaged by conflict.

(*spoke in English*)

Several challenges that require the sustained attention of the international community remain. The draft resolution therefore requests the Secretary-General to provide the members of the Standing Advisory Committee with the necessary support for the implementation and smooth functioning of the Council for Peace and Security in Central Africa and of the Subregional Centre for Human Rights and Democracy

in Central Africa. It is also essential that we continue to provide support to carry out the full programme of activities adopted at regional ministerial meetings, the most recent of which was held at Kigali, Rwanda, from 25 to 29 September 2006. Among the outcomes of that meeting was the decision to convene a subregional conference at Yaoundé, Cameroon, to address transnational security problems in the subregion. That decision was prompted by the situation in Darfur, but also recognizing that similar transnational security problems also exist in other parts of the subregion.

There have been only minor changes to the language of draft resolution A/C.1/61/L.33 compared with the text adopted last year as resolution 60/87. The substance remains essentially the same. We therefore look forward to the support of all delegations for the draft resolution, previous versions of which have already had a positive impact on the security situation in the subregion. The adoption of the draft resolution by consensus would send a strong message about the international community's continued commitment to comprehensively addressing the security challenges facing Central Africa.

The Chairperson: I give the floor to the representative of the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, who will introduce draft resolution A/C.1/61/L.46.

Mr. Stevcevski (the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia): I have the honour to introduce draft resolution A/C.1/61/L.46, entitled "Maintenance of international security — good-neighbourliness, stability and development in South-Eastern Europe".

This draft resolution is a follow-up to resolution 59/59, which the General Assembly adopted in 2004 without a vote and which was widely sponsored by the membership: it had 46 sponsors. It addresses the complexity of the issues of security, disarmament, stability and cooperation, and in that regard reflects the relevant developments in the region over the past two years: in 2002 this traditional resolution of the First Committee was biennialized. The thrust of the draft resolution remains the further promotion of good-neighbourliness, cooperation and integration as crucial to security, lasting stability and sustainable development of the region.

South-Eastern Europe has undergone many positive changes that have brought about a positive climate in the region. These positive developments are duly reflected in the text of the draft resolution. Cooperation among the countries in the region has been intensified, especially in the economic field, and their rapprochement with the European Union (EU) and with the Euro-Atlantic institutions has been furthered. In the course of the past two years, the EU accession negotiations of Croatia and Turkey commenced, the Republic of Macedonia became a candidate country for membership in the European Union, Albania signed a Stabilization and Association Agreement with the EU, and Serbia, Bosnia and Herzegovina and Montenegro all entered into negotiations with the EU on stabilization and association agreements. The United Nations, the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe, the Stability Pact for South-Eastern Europe and the South-East European Cooperation Process, as well as other regional organizations or initiatives, have all contributed to these positive processes, which could lead to full integration of all the countries of the region into the European Union and the Euro-Atlantic structures.

However, as we know, the region still faces challenges that could affect its overall security and stability. It is important that those challenges be managed in a way that can only bring more stability and security to the region.

Anti-personnel mines and explosive remnants of war continue to be an issue for certain parts of the region. The same is true of the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons, trafficking in human beings, drug trafficking, money laundering, organized crime and corruption, although progress has been made. A stronger and more continuous regional response and concerted efforts in strengthening the rule of law and enforcing appropriate measures are therefore required. There is a need for strengthened national, subregional and regional efforts and closer cooperation among States aimed at arms control, disarmament and confidence-building measures, non-proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, demining and preventing all acts of terrorism. All those issues and actions are duly noted or requested in the draft resolution.

Responsibility for stability and development in South-Eastern Europe rests primarily with the countries of the region. It is encouraging that countries of the region have increased their efforts to overcome the so-called culture of dependency and are taking responsibility for and ownership of an enhanced

regional cooperation. The gradual transformation of the Stability Pact for South-Eastern Europe into a more regionally owned cooperation framework bears witnesses to that effort. Also, the cooperation of the countries participating in the South-East European Cooperation Process has became more substantial and increasingly important.

My delegation trusts that draft resolution A/C.1/61/L.46 is forward-looking. Its aim remains to identify measures and efforts that will lead to the further stabilization of South-Eastern Europe, to the reduction and elimination of threats to its security and to the fostering of development. In the course of consultations thus far, many of the suggestions raised by interested delegations to improve the text have been taken on board and incorporated into the draft resolution. It is the wish of my delegation, as the traditional main sponsor of this draft resolution. to reach consensual support so that the Committee can adopt, without a vote, a text that is widely sponsored by the membership, as has been the case many times before.

To that end, my delegation will spare no effort in the coming days, in consultation and cooperation with all interested delegations, to reconcile the remaining differences that still exist over a few paragraphs. We will then submit a revised text of the draft resolution, which will be issued by the Secretariat as document A/C.1/61/L.46/Rev.1.

The Chairperson: We shall now proceed to our thematic discussion on disarmament machinery. I shall first give the floor to delegations wishing to make statements on that subject.

Mr. Kahiluoto (Finland): I am speaking on behalf of the European Union and the States that align themselves with this statement.

As a firm supporter of effective multilateralism, the European Union (EU) attaches great importance to a disarmament machinery that works. The European Union sees as mutually reinforcing the General Assembly and its First Committee, the Conference on Disarmament, the Disarmament Commission, and the various international treaties with their bodies and review processes. This disarmament machinery has played a fundamental role in producing vital pieces of international law as well as in creating mechanisms to monitor the implementation of and respect for the relevant treaties and norms. Each part of the machinery has its own role and tasks, with its own added value which should be used to the maximum, thus paving the way for decisions that make the world a safer place for all of our citizens.

The General Assembly and its Main Committees form a universal decision-making forum, and as such they must reflect the most pressing contemporary challenges in their work. The Committees also need to be able to respond to the growing interconnectedness of the issues before the General Assembly.

The European Union has been very committed to the revitalization of the First Committee. The EU welcomes the progress made on this matter with the principles agreed upon at the fifty-eighth and fifty-ninth sessions of the General Assembly and agrees with those who stress the importance of implementation of those principles. There remains work to be done to this end, and the issues need to be kept under regular review. We would like to offer you, Madam Chairperson, and the secretariat of the Department for Disarmament Affairs, our encouragement and our thanks for your efforts on this issue.

The Conference on Disarmament is the single multilateral forum at the disposal of the international community for disarmament negotiations. For a decade, the lack of a shared analysis of threats and challenges to the maintenance of international peace and security has kept the Conference from conducting substantive negotiation work. However, this year has been different from previous years in the Conference on Disarmament, as new momentum has been developing as a result of the innovative initiative of the six Presidents of the Conference this year. The EU warmly welcomes the revitalization developments in the Conference this year: agreement on a schedule of activities, focused structured debates, valuable work done by the Friends of the Presidents and proposals made regarding the Conference's future work, which have led to an increased level of activities. We sincerely hope that the focused structured debates the Conference on Disarmament has had this year will create sufficient momentum to overcome the current deadlock and bring that important body back to substantive negotiation work.

The Disarmament Commission too has an important role to play as a universal deliberative body on disarmament. The European Union welcomes the agreement on its agenda and the subsequent resumption

of its work this year, after several years of inactivity. The objective of the EU is that the UNDC agree on recommendations for achieving the objectives of nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation of nuclear weapons and on practical confidence-building measures in the field of conventional arms, in accordance with the substantive agenda items of the Commission's current three-year cycle. The European Union wishes to see the full potential of the Disarmament Commission used now that it has resumed work and now that the effectiveness of the Commission's working methods is being enhanced.

While there is room for further improvement, that machinery continues to have the basic potential to fulfil its functions. Naturally, the secretariat servicing this machinery, the Department for Disarmament Affairs, needs to be adequately resourced to do the everyday practical work. This year has brought some constructive and promising discussions, and we should use the momentum to build on them. In the end, what is essential if any machinery of this kind is to work is the political will to use it in good faith and to comply fully with the obligations and commitments that are produced.

Mr. Meyer (Canada): There is some symbolism to the fact that our discussions on the United Nations disarmament machinery are relegated to the bottom of the list of our thematic debates. I say this not because the subject is less important than the other clusters, but because it is in fact critical as we attempt to make progress on nuclear, conventional and other issues from our list. In this respect, it seems fitting to consider today's subject as underpinning and supporting the discussions we have had over the past two weeks.

An objective assessment of the existing multilateral disarmament machinery in recent years suggests that it is not functioning as intended. The Conference on Disarmament last produced a new treaty in 1996, a decade ago. Virtualiy since then, it has been without even a programme of work. The Disarmament Commission agreed on an agenda for the first time since 2003, but it too has not managed to advance issues in recent years. It has been 18 years since States could agree to convene a special session of the General Assembly on disarmament, arms control and the non-proliferation of weapons of mass destruction. More recent examples of the machinery's troubles include this summer's Conference to Review Progress Made in the Implementation of the Programme of Action on Small Arms and Light Weapons, which concluded without agreement on an outcome document, much like the May 2005 Review Conference of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) before it. A great deal of time, money and effort went into the preparation and organization of those meetings, and we should ask ourselves if the results have been worth it. Are we seriously committed to the process, or are we merely going through the motions?

There is the argument that these outcomes are not the fault of the machinery itself, but rather a reflection of the lack of political will in the international community when it comes to disarmament issues. To be sure, political will is critical in pursuing nuclear disarmament, but it is critical also in robustly working to stem proliferation. In his address to the General Assembly during its general debate last month (see A/61/PV.14), Canada's Prime Minister, Stephen Harper, noted that nuclear proliferation threatens us all and challenged the international community to ensure that Security Council decisions are implemented fully.

However, political will is not the only component of the equation. Sometimes it is the machinery that is not responding properly, and in those cases a proper tune-up can help get it going again.

This year in the Conference on Disarmament, we saw that a new approach of coordinated presidencies, the so-called Six Presidents initiative, led to a year-long timetable of focused, structured debates on all agenda items, with expert participation. This represented an important improvement over the previous year. It also left us with some optimism that we can do better. The Conference on Disarmament has not yet resumed its expected level of work, or produced any concrete results, and a mere repetition of the Six Presidents initiative in 2007 could not be considered a success. Rather, we would need to see the Conference on Disarmament making far better use of the time allocated to it, with more attention paid to issues that are ripe for negotiation rather than equal treatment for all agenda items. We would also need to see a mechanism established for the Conference to carry its work forward in a consistent fashion throughout the year. The results of the 2006 session offer some hope that those relatively modest goals can be achieved.

The First Committee is another example of where a recent tune-up has helped improve functioning. We are now in the routine of organizing our work in thematic clusters, and we have productive interactive debates, with invited speakers and representatives of non-governmental organizations. A more businesslike attitude to time management means we conclude the same amount of work in fewer meetings. There is still more to be done, for example securing agreement in General Committee to move formally to an agenda that reflects the issue areas we are dealing with rather than being a mere enumeration of resolution titles, and further rationalization of resolutions to minimize the annual repetition and to emphasize follow-up. Still, we feel that our work here can serve as an example to other disarmament forums.

Another way to tune up the machinery would be to convene a fourth special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament. Efforts have been ongoing since 1994 to convene such a gathering, which could be charged with a wider review of the disarmament machinery and with making recommendations for improvements, in addition to the necessary tasks of reviewing progress since the first special session and identifying priorities going forward.

Finally, we should keep an open mind on new and innovative ways to rejuvenate or augment the existing machinery when circumstances are deemed appropriate by the international community. Recent examples of such variable-geometry arrangements, such as the Ottawa Landmine Convention and the Protocols to the Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons, show how norms can be established and influence behaviour even when the instruments have less than universal adherence. Such approaches may not be valid for all issues, but if the existing machinery is not responding to real-world needs we should not shy away from exploring other ways of doing business.

With two more review conferences scheduled for later this year, with the improved atmosphere in the Conference on Disarmament and with the meetings of the Preparatory Committee for the 2010 NPT Review Conference to be held in the first part of 2007, we will have ample opportunity in the coming months to demonstrate that the machine can work better. Canada will certainly do its part to push for positive results, building upon our collective efforts to achieve permanence with accountability at the 2005 NPT Review Conference and with new working papers for the upcoming Biological and Toxin Weapons Convention Review Conference. If, however, events next year suggest that the machine may be beyond repair, we should not be afraid, a year hence, to look into new ideas for making progress on critical disarmament files.

The Chairperson: I call once again on the representative of Canada, to introduce draft decision A/C.1/61/L.22.

Mr. Meyer (Canada): Also under this cluster, I wish to introduce draft decision A/C.1/61/L.22, entitled "Verification in all its aspects, including the role of the United Nations in the field of verification". The draft resolution follows from resolution 59/60, which two years ago created a Panel of Government Experts to review the question of verification.

As we heard from the Chair of that Panel in the presentation to our Committee on 16 October, the experts met three times in 2006. While the recommendations have been agreed upon, a few elements of the narrative text remain open, so the final report is not yet concluded. Nevertheless, consultations among Panel members continue, and the Chair is optimistic that a consensus will be reached in the near future.

Canada believes that the work done by the Panel, once completed, should be put forward for endorsement by the full General Assembly. Resolution 59/60 mandated the Panel to report back to the General Assembly at the sixty-first session, so we had hoped that the First Committee could take up the report this year. However, since the sixty-first session lasts until next September, the report could be presented later this year or even early next year, according to the timeline established. In that case, the report could be taken up by the First Committee at its session in autumn 2007.

As it now appears impossible that the report will be ready for consideration by the First Committee this year, Canada has introduced draft decision A/C.1/61/L.22, which defers action to next year's session. The draft decision also welcomes the update given by the Chair earlier this week and encourages the Panel to complete its work quickly. Resolution 59/60, which called for the establishment of the Panel, was adopted without a vote in 2004. We hope that this draft decision, which is essentially procedural and in the

same spirit, will likewise be adopted by consensus in the Committee.

Mr. Rapacki (Poland): As this is the first time that I have taken the floor at the present session of the First Committee, allow me to congratulate you, Madam, on your assumption of the chairmanship of the Committee. It is a reflection of your country's long-standing positive involvement in global disarmament and in efforts to make the disarmament machinery functional.

The representative of Finland has already spoken on behalf of the European Union during this thematic debate, and my country fully stands behind that statement. However, allow me to touch upon a few points from Poland's national perspective.

This year, Poland has had the privilege to actively participate in the work of two bodies of the disarmament machinery: as a President of the Conference on Disarmament, in Geneva, and as a Vice-Chair of the Disarmament Commission. Poland was also a Vice-Chair of the first United Nations Conference to Review Progress Made in the Implementation of the Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects. In addition, my country will have the privilege to serve as Vice-President of the Review Conference of the Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons, which will take place in Geneva in the near future.

All of that reflects Poland's dedication to the cause of global disarmament and our belief that it is only through active involvement by everyone that we can make the disarmament machinery work. It was with great satisfaction that we were able to participate in the revival of work within those two bodies: the Disarmament Commission restarted its substantive work and held long-awaited deliberations, while the Conference on Disarmament developed new momentum.

One year ago, I spoke to the Committee about the plans of the incoming six Presidents of the Conference on Disarmament (see A/C.1/60/PV.14). Together with the Republic of Korea, Romania, the Russian Federation, Senegal and Slovakia, we have worked hard to fulfil those promises and commitments. This year, building on the positive activities of the Presidents of the Conference in 2004 and 2005, we scheduled the work of the Conference. The basis for that schedule was the Conference agenda. One-week structured debates have proved that the agenda is still valid and is broad enough to deal with all issues of major interest to member States.

The key for this year's activities was the cooperation among the six Presidents of the session and the active involvement of all delegations. The cooperation among the Presidents enabled us to overcome shortcomings related to the four-week-long presidencies. The active involvement of all delegations and the participation of experts from capitals have proved that all member States believe that the Conference on Disarmament is an important body that can contribute to the field of international security and disarmament.

During 2006, we deepened our understanding of all key items of the Conference agenda. That helped delegations to determine which issues are riper for negotiations and which require further in-depth discussion before we start proper negotiations. We did not restart negotiations, which is the ultimate goal of the Conference, but we believe that we brought the Conference closer to reaching a consensus on doing so. I should also say that this year, the Conference on Disarmament, through the many debates it held, reviewed its agenda and methods of work. That should be a continuous process, and we are sure that it will continue next year.

The current President of the Conference on Disarmament, the representative of Slovakia, Mr. Anton Pinter, informed the Committee two days ago that the six Conference Presidents had presented their vision non-paper at the end of this year's session. In the non-paper, the Presidents expressed their views regarding what is possible next year. At the beginning of the 2007 session, the Conference should consider to making a formal decision or decisions on the establishment of subsidiary bodies, working groups or expert groups to negotiate issues that are ripe for this, and to agree on a schedule of activities which would provide for substantive discussion on all other issues on the Conference agenda.

When thinking about negotiations in the Conference on Disarmament, we must keep in mind that all the issues cannot be negotiated at once. The history of the Conference shows that there has never been more than one full-fledged negotiation at a time. Therefore, we have to concentrate on those issues that

are closest to being brought to the negotiating table. In the opinion of the Polish delegation, the fissile material cut-off treaty is such an issue. At the same time, we should ensure that our attention is not diverted from other issues on the Conference agenda. That could best be done through the adoption of a schedule of activities based on all agenda items.

The experience of this year demonstrates that a schedule of activities would itself provide an efficient framework for advancing the substantive work of the Conference on Disarmament, pending agreement on a programme of work and on the establishment of subsidiary bodies, as well as the opening of de facto negotiations. Future structured debates that are not limited to a particular period could provide for regular debates throughout the year. A certain flexibility is needed to intensify discussion on issues requiring more attention. Experts should be invited not only from capitals, but also from the relevant international organizations and United Nations bodies — including the International Atomic Energy Agency, the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons, the Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space, the United Nations Office for Outer Space Affairs and United Nations groups of governmental experts — as their presence is vital in order to keep the Conference open to the work of other organizations and, in a broader sense, to the realities of the outside world.

The Friends of the Presidents mechanism can be further strengthened with a view to seeking consensus on specific substantive issues, including possible mandates. Here, I wish to thank the Friends of this year's Presidents — Ms. Sarala Fernando of Sri Lanka, Mr. Idriss Al-Jazairy of Algeria, Mr. Petko Draganov of Bulgaria, Mr. Juan Martabit of Chile, Mr. Carlo Trezza of Italy and Mr. Yoshiki Mine of Japan — who spared no efforts in supporting the Presidents of the Conference at its 2006 session.

The incoming Presidents of the Conference — South Africa, Spain, Sri Lanka, Sweden, Switzerland and Syria — will have to look for even more innovative and creative solutions than we found this year. Positive developments will also require flexibility, cooperation and goodwill on the part of all member States. My delegation stands ready to continue its active participation in all efforts to advance the substantive work of the Conference on Disarmament.

In conclusion, I wish to express my hope that, after years of stalemate, unadopted final documents and general crisis in the disarmament machinery, 2007 will prove to be a better year, marked by positive developments in the multilateral disarmament forums. As I said in the Conference earlier this year, the outside world wastes no time in seeking solutions that the United Nations machinery cannot provide, as shown by last week's events. It is up to us — all Member States — to bring those forums closer to the realities of today's world and to make them fully functional and able to deal with problems.

Mr. Costea (Romania) (*spoke in French*): As this is the first occasion on which the Romanian delegation has taken the floor during this session, I should like, as is customary, to congratulate you, Madam, on the way in which you are guiding our work. The advantage of speaking for the first time during the second half of the session is that those words of congratulation cannot be considered a mere formality, since we have had the benefit of watching you work over the past three weeks.

Romania supports the statement made by the representative of Finland on behalf of the European Union. I would respectfully ask Committee members to view my statement as a way of encouraging them to devote some time to the subject of the Conference on Disarmament, in particular those aspects pertaining to the apparently contradictory relationship between what the Conference is perceived to have done and what actually took place in the Council Chamber in Geneva.

I would like first of all to refer to the relationship — or, rather, the lack thereof — between the report on this year's session (A/61/27) and what actually took place. I am referring here to the proposal made by the President of the Conference during the panel debate the day before yesterday, which is also reflected in the draft resolution on this year's session of the Conference (A/C.1/61/L.29), on the need to see the records of the debates. We really need to read — or, at least, to see — those records in order to find out whether they provide evidence supporting the claim that the Conference has taken a small step forward by leaving behind the almost total passivity of recent years. But we must be attentive. There are always two ways of seeing a glass that is half full.

(spoke in English)

At this year's session, the Conference came closer to the normal rhythm of work that such a body must have. The figures prove it: 49 formal and 22 informal meetings were held in 2006, as against an average of 27 formal and 8 informal meetings for the previous six years. In terms of the structure and nature of the debates, we returned to the normal mix of political and technical components that the Conference on Disarmament needs to have in conducting its activities. Last but not least, because of the participation of experts, we acknowledged the high level of expertise on which deliberations and decisions need to rely.

Another aspect of the "half full" interpretation is what made it possible to move a small step away from the dire situation that the Conference on Disarmament had been in: the readiness of member States to accept and commit to a new approach to their work. Without that, the Six Presidents initiative would have remained nothing more than a good intention. We have heard several delegations asking for room to be made for creativity in our work. My understanding is that such a call is not restricted to the Presidents of the Conference.

However, we must also consider the other half of the glass. I have already alluded to one of its components — the weird relationship between the reality of what we did and the content of the report.

The most important shortcoming, however, is, of course, the obvious one: there was no negotiation. That means that, if nothing worthwhile for disarmament is undertaken, our reputation will be endangered; we will run the risk of losing the confidence of the nations of the world. Those are not my words, and they do not refer to the Conference on Disarmament. Some 80 years ago, Lord Robert Cecil made similar remarks about the League of Nations. This year in the Conference on Disarmament we heard calls for attention to be paid to real life outside the Council Chamber. Being an optimist by nature and a realist by profession, I am hopeful that we will heed those calls before they turn into the deafening rumblings of conflict and destruction.

We can do that. Perhaps it will take a bit of effort to admit, for instance, that national priorities are not mutually exclusive — yet it is worth doing that. It is also important, in our view, to set aside — at least for a little while — the mistrust and fear of hidden agendas when we look at a new draft or a new proposal for work.

I found this saying in a book of great wisdom: "A job that is never started takes longest". Likewise, we may soon face the difficult choice between what is right and what is easy. We certainly hope that the membership of the Conference on Disarmament will make the right choice.

Mr. Masood Khan (Pakistan): Two questions are asked frequently about the disarmament machinery: "Is it effective?", and "Do we need to change it?" The intent of the questions is not fully clear. The General Assembly, its subsidiary bodies the First Committee and the Disarmament Commission, as well as the Conference on Disarmament, are the core standard-setting and law-making organs. In addition to that we have the Secretary-General's Advisory Board on Disarmament Matters. The Department for Disarmament Affairs is the disarmament secretariat in New York and Geneva, and it has regional centres. The disarmament machinery's basic three-tier architecture — deliberative, in the case of the Disarmament Commission; consensus-building, in the case of the First Committee; and negotiating treaties and conventions, in the case of the Conference on Disarmament — is sound, flexible and resilient. Its current weaknesses stem from a political malaise, not from structural or functional defects.

All of those bodies and entities are adequate and have the huge potential for producing optimal results. If member States have deep divergences, they cannot shift the blame to the machinery. The machinery will take Member States where they want to go. Of its own volition, the machinery cannot take initiatives or engage in unregulated movement. If there is no direction at the strategic level, the bodies dealing with disarmament and non-proliferation are bound to suffer from varying degrees of inaction and even reluctance to move forward.

During the past three years, there has been enhanced focus on disarmament and non-proliferation of nuclear, biological and chemical weapons and their means of delivery; small arms and light weapons; and landmines. The area that has been neglected is other conventional weapons. There was enhanced focus and dialogue on the broad areas that I have highlighted, but there were no results, because of the deep differences

among Member States. That is seen as a setback, particularly the lack of an outcome at the Review Conference of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons, the 2005 World Summit and the review Conference on small arms and light weapons. The Secretary-General has pointed out that the lack of a reference to disarmament and non-proliferation in the September 2005 Summit Outcome Document was the result of posturing by States. But the malaise goes deeper than that.

Pakistan has repeatedly pointed out that those well publicized failures are symptomatic of the serious erosion of the existing consensus on the most critical issues: nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation. They are not the faults of the disarmament machinery per se.

We have therefore proposed the convening of an international conference to revisit the old consensus and craft a new one to enable the international community to walk out of a prolonged impasse. The Weapons of Mass Destruction Commission has also recommended a General Assembly summit on disarmament, non-proliferation and terrorist use of weapons of mass destruction, which could also discuss the efficiency and effectiveness of the disarmament machinery. We have deliberately kept the level of the conference vague and have suggested that it could be a special conference of the Disarmament Commission or the Conference on Disarmament. A fourth special session of the General Assembly on disarmament (SSOD IV) could be another venue for such discussions.

The 2005 Outcome Document did, however, partially address conventional arms in the context of peacekeeping. Implementation of the Programme of Action on Small Arms and Light Weapons was supported, and States parties to the Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons were asked to give greater assistance to mine-affected States.

The picture with regard to using the machinery under the well-known constraints has not been bleak. The First Committee has taken incremental but highly commendable steps to streamline the conduct of its meetings, particularly with regard to working methods, general debate, interactive debates and thematic clustering. Rationalization of the agenda, however, should not be used to remove subjects of vital importance because some countries are not comfortable with them. If the recommendations in the resolutions presented year after year are not heeded, ways should be explored to implement them more effectively — not to move them away from the table.

The Conference on Disarmament was energized this year through structured debates. It is true that the Conference is a negotiating, not a deliberative, forum, though discussion would always precede serious treaty-making. We do not yet have a programme of work, without which we cannot break the chronic logjam in the Conference on Disarmament. There is nothing wrong with the rule of consensus followed by the Conference. The proposal to adopt its programme of work by a qualified majority of two-thirds of the members present and voting would lead to long debates in the Conference and deepen its impasse.

This year, the Disarmament Commission started making a transition towards a better appreciation of the threats to peace and security. Its new working methods should help make it more effective.

The existing machinery includes treaty bodies, some of which have performed well. The International Atomic Energy Agency is in good shape. During this session, the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons has been repeatedly referred to as a success story. The States parties to the Biological Weapons Convention have been holding annual meetings to discussion confidence-building measures, new scientific and technological developments, biosecurity and codes of conduct. Let us hope their Sixth Review Conference will produce a solid outcome. The States parties to the Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons have been particularly busy. All these regimes have once again enhanced the confidence of the international community in the legitimacy, longevity and effectiveness of multilateralism, as opposed to short-lived, non-institutionalized and exclusive forums.

We believe that the new Secretary-General should give fresh impetus, strength and direction to the Department for Disarmament Affairs. We have full confidence in Mr. Nobuaki Tanaka, who is heading the Department. He has joined it at the most opportune time. No attempt should be made to weaken the Department in any way. Its institutional and intellectual sinews must be strengthened.

It is also important to use the full potential of the Advisory Board on Disarmament Matters. It should not

merely replicate what Member States are doing. It can take up the challenge of providing advice on how the existing agreements on disarmament and non-proliferation can be revalidated and how a new security consensus can be built. It should keep itself above minutiae and address strategic questions.

Under-Secretary-General Tanaka has given a good motto to the disarmament machinery, which is to take positive, practical steps [that] are within our reach. We should continue to do so until we have a new security consensus. We shall also reiterate our proposal of last year that every year the Chair of the First Committee should hold informal consultations to help the Committee focus on a host of institutional and substantive issues.

The Chairperson: We still have six speakers left on the list, as well as a number of delegations wishing to introduce draft resolutions. We will have to continue with the list on Monday afternoon, prior to beginning the action part of our work. In accordance with the Committee's programme of work and timetable, the third and final phase of our work — action on all draft resolutions and decisions submitted under agenda items 82 to 97 — will begin next week.

In this regard, I would like to draw your attention to the clustering paper containing document A/C.1/61/CRP.4, which was circulated in advance on Wednesday. The Committee will begin its work by first taking action on a number of draft resolutions that are contained in cluster 1, namely, "Nuclear weapons" on Monday, 23 October, before moving on to draft resolutions contained in the other clusters.

In this regard, an informal paper containing the list of draft resolutions that are ready for action in each of the seven clusters has been circulated by the Secretariat. It is my intention, with the Committee's cooperation and on the basis of past practices and precedents, to move as efficiently as possible from one cluster to another upon the completion of action on each given cluster.

Nonetheless, while following this procedure, the Committee will maintain a certain degree of flexibility. It is my intention to follow the precedents set during the past session in proceeding with the action on all draft resolutions. Consequently, during the decision-taking stage on each individual cluster, delegations will first have the last opportunity to introduce draft resolutions with regard to any particular cluster. Therefore, I would kindly request those delegations that plan on introducing the remaining draft resolutions to be as brief as possible when doing so.

In addition, delegations wishing to make general statements or comments other than explanations of vote on the draft resolutions in a specific cluster will be permitted to do so. Thereafter, delegations will be provided the opportunity to explain their positions or votes in a consolidated statement on all the draft resolutions and decisions contained in a particular cluster before the Committee proceeds to take action on them, one after the other, without any interruption in between. In other words, delegations will have the chance to make explanations of their positions or votes in a consolidated fashion on all the draft resolutions contained in the specific cluster on which action will be taken.

I intend, with members' full cooperation, to strictly follow this procedure in order to ensure the full and efficient utilization of the time and conference resources allocated to the Committee. That is something I strongly believe all members of the Committee fully concur with. Consequently, I appeal to all delegations to strictly observe this procedure and to avoid any interruption once voting on a cluster begins.

Once the Committee completes action on all draft resolutions and decisions contained in a particular cluster, those delegations wishing to explain their positions or votes after the voting will be allowed to do so. However, like the consolidated explanations of vote before the voting, delegations are again requested to provide consolidated explanation of their positions after the voting on those respective draft resolutions in the given Cluster on which action was completed.

I would also like to stress that, in accordance with the rules of procedure, sponsors of draft resolutions are not permitted to make any statement in the explanation of their votes either before or after action is taken. Sponsors will, however, be permitted to make only general statements at the beginning of the meeting on a particular cluster. In order to avoid any misunderstandings, I strongly urge those delegations seeking recorded votes on any particular draft resolution to kindly inform the Secretariat of their intentions as early as possible before the Committee starts taking action on any individual cluster.

Finally, concerning the postponement of action on any draft resolution, I urge all delegations to inform

the Secretariat in advance at least one day before action is taken on the draft resolution. Every effort, however, should be made to refrain from resorting to a deferment of action.

In order to ascertain that every delegation fully understands the process for the action phase, the Secretariat has prepared an information sheet similar to the one that was circulated in previous years regarding the ground rules for taking action on draft resolutions.

It is my intention, with the agreement of the Committee, to follow the procedures that I have just outlined during the third phase of our work. May I take it that the Committee agrees with the procedure that I have just outlined? I hear no objection.

It was so decided.

In order to efficiently utilize the remaining time and facilities allocated to the Committee, I count on the full cooperation of all delegations in order to enable the Committee to conclude its work in a successful and efficient manner.

I now give the floor to the Secretary for a brief announcement.

Mr. Sareva (Secretary of the First Committee): I have just one piece of information. There will be an informal consultation on the draft resolution A/C.1/61/L.17, entitled "Declaration of the Fourth Disarmament Decade (2008-2018)", as announced in today's Journal.

The meeting rose at 1 p.m.